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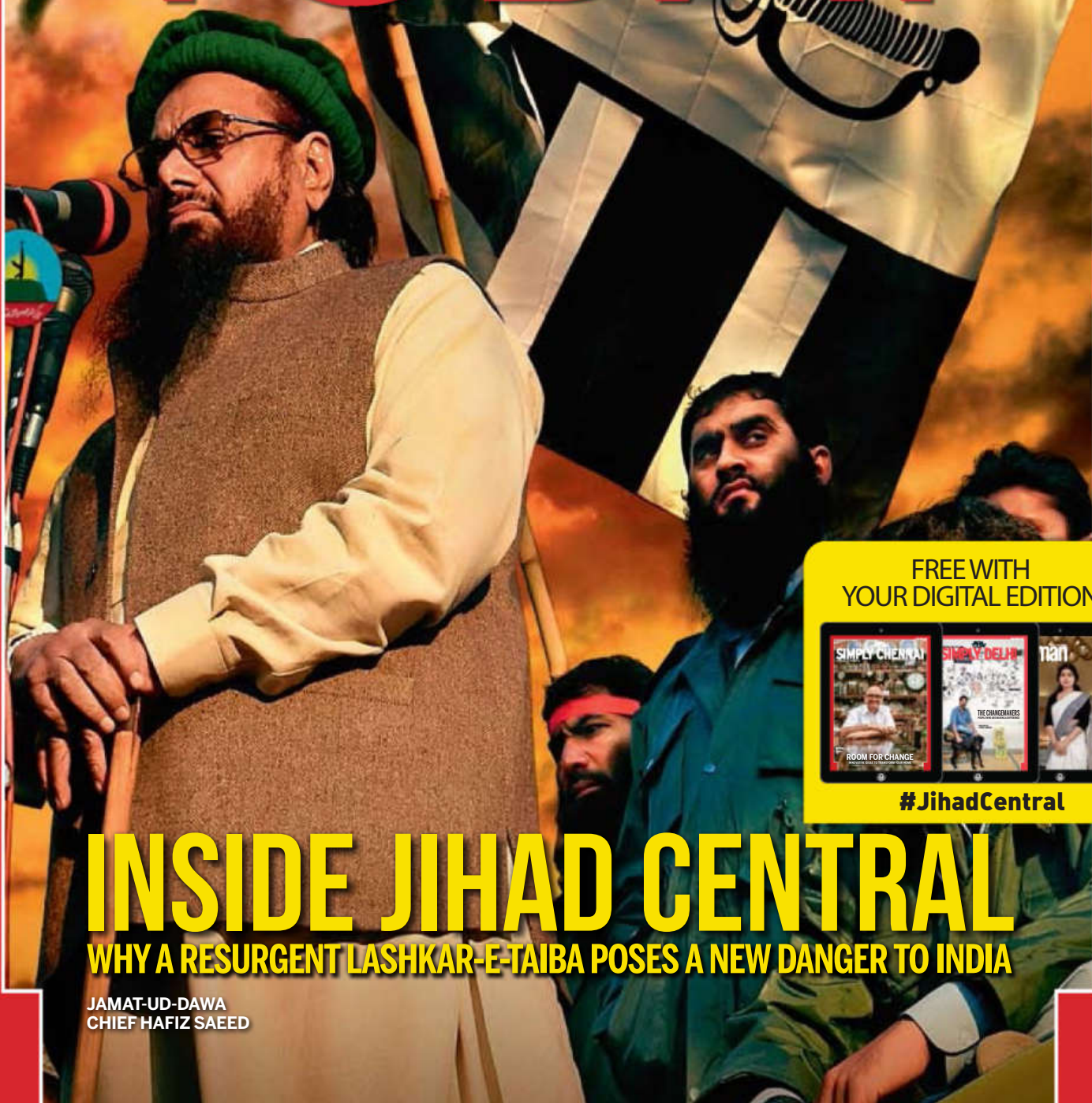
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JAMAT-UD-DAWA
CHIEF HAFIZ SAEED

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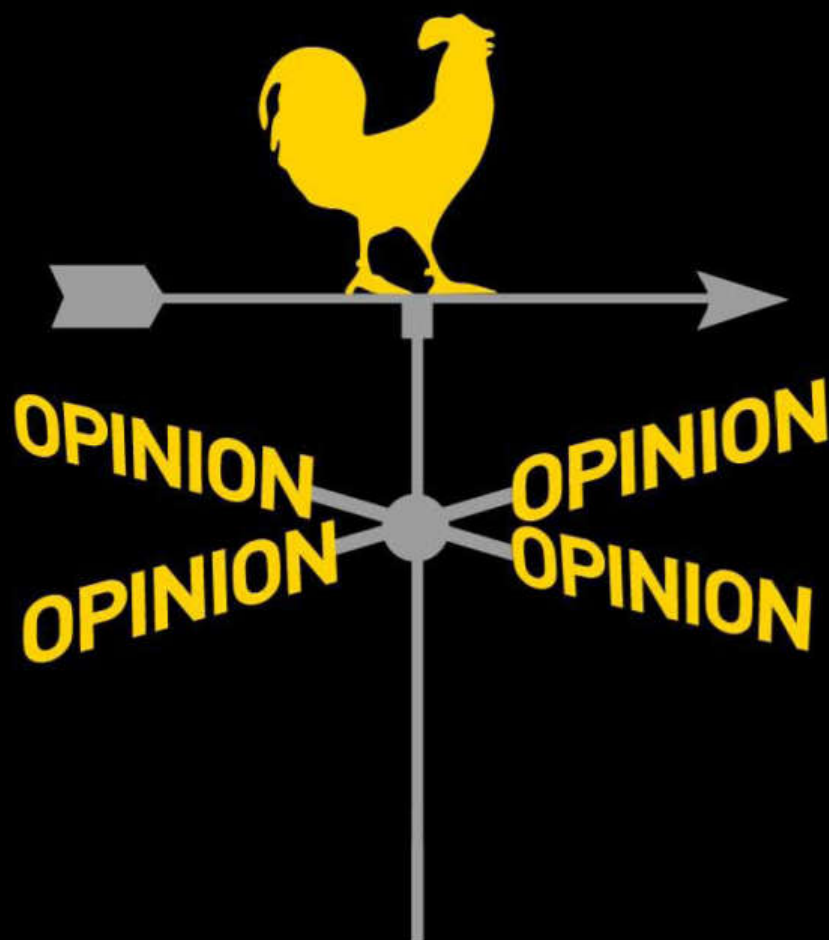
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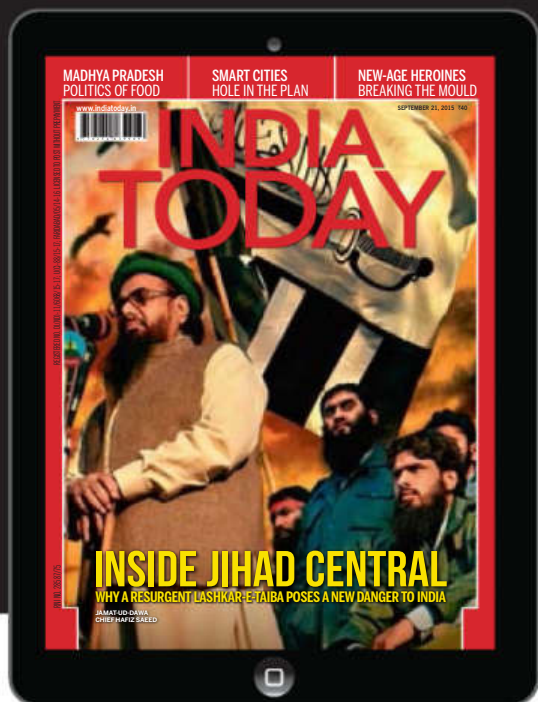
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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The last two months have witnessed another effort in the tenuous peace process between India and Pakistan come to nothing. The optimism after the headway made by Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Nawaz Sharif in July on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Ufa, Russia, has been quashed by an all-pervading sameness as talks between the national security advisers (NSAs) of both countries were cancelled at the eleventh hour.

As always over the last decade, the key sticking point remains the same—Pakistan's unwillingness to discuss cross-border terrorism, which is the single-biggest factor militating against a diplomatic resolution to the problems that dog India-Pakistan relations. If the NSAs had indeed met, Ajit Doval was to give his counterpart Sartaj Aziz a bulky dossier on the increased escalation of terror operatives from Pakistan on Indian soil since July, which is in direct contravention of the mood set at Ufa.

Two brazen attacks in India—on July 27 in Gurdaspur and on August 5 in Udhampur—have proved once again that a terror network is flourishing across the border under the aegis of the deep state ISI and the Pakistani army. A terrorist caught alive after the Udhampur attack, Mohammed Naved Yakub, has told Indian investigators that he is a Pakistani national, recruited by the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), trained in their camps, and sent to India to carry out a major *fidayeen* attack in Jammu & Kashmir. This is irrefutable evidence of a Pakistani hand in terror on Indian soil, as was the testimony of Ajmal Kasab after the 26/11 Mumbai attack. The trial for the Mumbai attack continues to drag on in Pakistan while its LeT mastermind Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi is out on bail since April.


The continuing attacks in India by the LeT also show that Sharif's pledge to not differentiate between "good" and "bad" terrorists, after Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan gunmen killed 132 schoolchildren in Peshawar in 2014, has made little difference on the ground. Pakistan's government continues to be held hostage by its military leaders, who blatantly promote and support the LeT as the principal terror group to target India. The LeT's main ideologue Hafiz Saeed, who calls himself a "social worker" and amir of the political group Jamat-ud-Dawa, has the biggest price on his head in the country. The US State Department had put out a \$10 million bounty for information leading to his arrest in 2012, but the big question remains: who will arrest him? By all accounts, Saeed travels in Pakistan in bullet- and bomb-proof SUVs, with radio jammers and bodyguards in tow, and gets security from the provincial police. Under him, the LeT has an operational reach and capacity that makes it far more dangerous than some underground non-state unit. It is clearly India's Enemy No. 1.

This week we examine the LeT—its motivations, its areas of influence, and its links with the Pakistani military establishment. Our cover story, by Deputy Editor Sandeep Unnithan and Pakistan correspondent Kaswar Klasra, goes inside 'Jihad Central' to reveal the terror infrastructure, the recruitment machine, and the cast of characters that make the LeT tick. In an exclusive interview to Klasra, Saeed proclaims he will not rest until his *fidayeen* "hoist Pakistan's national flag in New Delhi's Parliament". We also have a piece by C. Christine Fair, an associate professor at Georgetown University, who explains the inception and objectives of the LeT in vivid detail.

Governments in India and Pakistan have attempted to broker a solution to our raging border dispute at various times over the last two decades. But the game of war and peace has been rigged by organisations such as LeT that thrive and prosper under Pakistan's intelligence and military establishments. It is time Pakistan understands that violence only breeds more violence. A genuine peace process is not possible if one side is not willing to play by the rules.



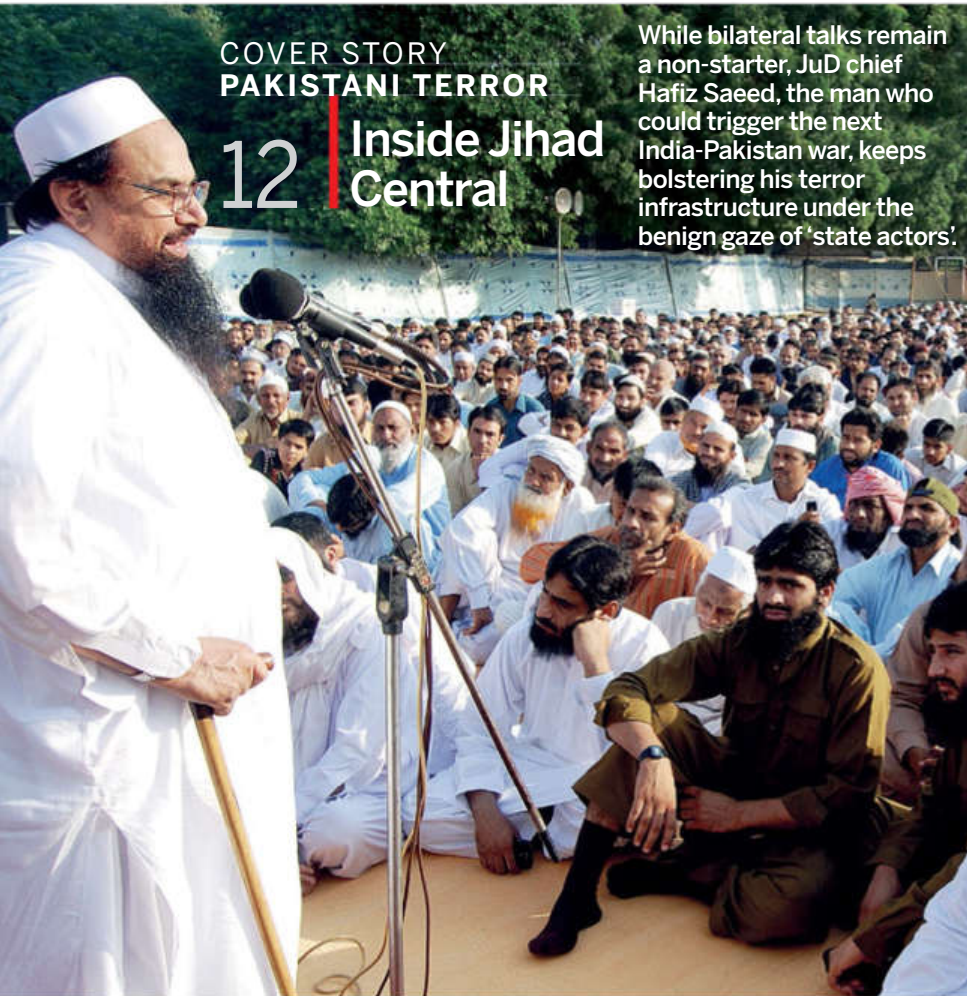
OUR JULY
2012 COVER


 (Aroon Purie)

COVER STORY
PAKISTANI TERROR

12 | Inside Jihad Central

While bilateral talks remain a non-starter, JuD chief Hafiz Saeed, the man who could trigger the next India-Pakistan war, keeps bolstering his terror infrastructure under the benign gaze of 'state actors.'



SPECIAL REPORT
SMART CITIES

36 | Modi's Smart Cities Have a Viability Gap

The PM's plan for 100 smart cities could be derailed by its proposed funding formula. Can cash-strapped states and municipal bodies raise 60 per cent of the project cost the Union government wants them to?

CINEMA
NEW STARS

42 | Who's That Girl?

A new crop of spunky actresses who wouldn't confine themselves to run-of-the-mill cinema and yet avoid getting the 'indie specialist' tag takes Bollywood by storm.



NATION
NGOs

22 | Fear of the Foreign Handout

The clampdown on foreign funding for NGOs smacks of a deep distrust of parallel development narratives.

ASSEMBLY POLLS
BIHAR

28 | Why Mahadalits Hold the Trump Card

With the NDA wooing them assiduously and Jitan Ram Manjhi out of the JD(U), Nitish Kumar faces an uphill task.



THE BIG STORY
MADHYA PRADESH

32 | Politics of Food

Agriculture powerhouse Madhya Pradesh still suffers from high levels of malnutrition, a contrast that exposes our flawed food policies.

- 6 UPFRONT
- 7 GLASS HOUSE
- 10 GROUND ZERO
- 52 GLOSSARY
- 54 EYECATCHERS

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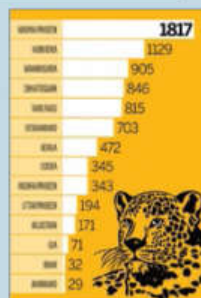
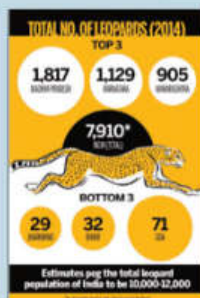
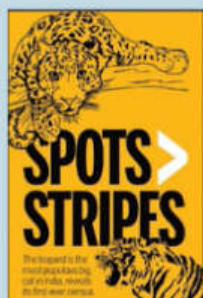
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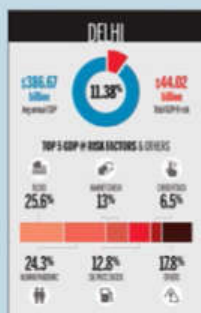
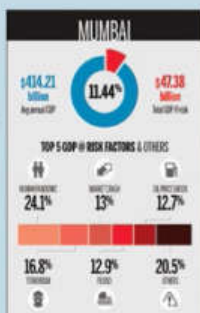
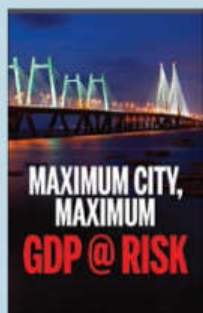
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MOST POPULAR INTERACTIVES

Spot the big difference First leopard census estimates 10,000 to 12,000 spotted big cats in India. <http://bit.ly/1hT5Yji>



Maximum city, maximum GDP Did you know India's top 10 cities have a total of \$179.8 billion GDP at risk? <http://bit.ly/10acGOB>



Good news Union minister Maneka Gandhi has proposed to increase maternity leave for working women from three to eight months. <http://bit.ly/1QII3ET>



MOST SHARED ON FACEBOOK

Policemen thrash women with sticks in Belgavi, Karnataka. Surprisingly, no one came to their rescue. 6,378

Prime Minister Narendra Modi boarded the Metro from Janpath station 504

When Israelis chanted 'Hare Rama, Hare Krishna' 316



MOST LIKED ON FACEBOOK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi boarded the Metro from Janpath station 25,710

Policemen thrash women with sticks in Belgavi, Karnataka. Surprisingly, no one came to their rescue. 5695

#MainHoonHeroTera: I cannot sing to save my life, says Salman Khan 5,010



MOST RETWEETED & FAVOURITED

In Israel, several Jews chant 'Hare Krishna, Hare Rama' to celebrate 267

Suresh Raina salutes players' wives and girlfriends on @TAKSONColors 190

Army veterans decide to call off #OROP strike after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assurance 151



MOST READ ONLINE STORIES

IndiaToday.in website homepage 192,306

IndiaToday.in website scorecard 119,094

Hrithik Roshan and Sonam Kapoor in 'Dheere Dheere Se': Watch Aashiqui 2.0 in this Honey Singh song 90,548

China Meltdown

SEPTEMBER 7, 2015

Exclusive report from Beijing on China's worst economic crisis. How India can take advantage.



“India must rise to the challenge, and get its manufacturing and infrastructure sectors in order, and become an economic powerhouse.”

KSHITIJ JAIN, *Jhotwara, Rajasthan*

Make the Most of the Crisis in China

The bursting of the China bubble has presented the Narendra Modi-led government the perfect opportunity to get the Make in India campaign up and running (Opportunity, Made in China). With an efficient manufacturing sector, India can expect to improve its export business. In terms of ease of doing business, the government is already removing bureaucratic bottlenecks. A sustained effort can see the Indian economy growing at more than 8 per cent in the near future.

SHRUTI KUMAR, *via email*

Vivek Law has rightly advised investors to go for long-term smart investment plans rather than betting big on the stock market. More than the China stock crash, I feel a below-average monsoon will hit the market hard. Under such volatile circumstances, recovery may be not be easy at all.

A. BHATTACHARYA, *Mumbai*



Build Pressure on Pakistan

Countries affected by the scourge of terrorism need to build pressure on Pakistan to stop giving shelter to Dawood Ibrahim, the mastermind of the 1993 Bombay blasts (Interpol Can't Get us Dawood, September 7). India also needs to

seek support of the United Arab Emirates—the gangster has been spotted in Dubai umpteen number of times—to not provide Dawood shelter or any opportunity to operate his illegal businesses. A weakened and frustrated Dawood should be easy to find for India.

SHWETA CHAUDHARY, *Delhi*

The China growth story, driven by exports and a propped-up currency by a closed political system, was bound to fall flat sooner or later. The current economic crisis there vindicates our economic model for development which is more open and inclusive.

K.R. NAMBIAR, *Mumbai*

Talk on Terror, Sans Kashmir

The Indian government, led by Narendra Modi, has taken a tough stance in laying down the parameters for any discussion on terrorism with Pakistan—no talk on Kashmir, and no talk with separatists (Failure of Triumphalism).

The members of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) are not elected representatives of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. If they enjoy any support, they should have proved it in the elections. Should Indian diplomats visiting Pakistan be allowed to meet the Baloch dissidents before starting



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GREAT FALL OF CHINA

The China story was more about creating an awe than staying rooted in reality. A crash was waiting to happen.

C.A. Dinesh
PERILOUS LEAP BACKWARDS

Now is an opportunity for the government to abolish the quota system and bring in a policy on merit-based employment.
Sree

THREE OFFICERS AND THEIR LOST CAUSE

For men with access to the nation's deepest, sometimes darkest secrets, candour is not a virtue. Some secrets are meant to be taken to the grave.

Ashok
MODI'S NEW PAKISTAN PLAN

India-Pakistan peace means no terrorism, development of both nations and resumption of sporting ties, particularly cricket.
Anita Gupta

talks with the Pakistani government?

J.S. ACHARYA, *Hyderabad*

For improved relations between India and Pakistan, both countries need to keep their expectations real and not draw red lines, such as stopping Pakistani leaders even from meeting Hurriyat leaders. No talks can happen without a reference to the Kashmir issue, but the countries need to approach the issue sensitively and not act in haste to arrive at a conclusion.

AKSHAY VISWANATHAN, *Thiruvananthapuram*

It is time India stopped holding talks with Pakistan on Kashmir, terrorism and ceasefire violations along the Line of Control. Pakistan does not understand the language of peace, not until the time the ISI and Pakistan's arrogant army dominates and controls the civilian government. Through frequent terror attacks and infiltration attempts, the Pakistani army and the ISI are sending a clear message to India to either cede Kashmir to them or brace for war.

YOGESHWAR DAVAR, *Hisar*

A Wicked Plot?

The Patidars of Gujarat are a well-off community (Perilous Leap Backwards,



A Mixed Bag

Pray what crime is being committed if a person voluntarily sacrifices his life as per a way prescribed by his religion (Law and Life Vs Faith and Death, September 7). A court should not and cannot meddle in the religious practices of communities. If changes are desired, they should be initiated by members of the particular community, not by the court. By the same token, can any court declare animal sacrifice illegal and ban the slaughter of goats on Bakri Id on the grounds that 'halal' is a cruel practice?

AVINASH GODBOLEY, *Dewas*

The Rajasthan High Court is right in holding the practice of Santhara as a criminal offence. In a country where the Constitution doesn't allow active euthanasia for terminally ill patients, the high court is justified in opposing Santhara. Also, sometimes people can be coerced into opting for it, as happened in several instances of Sati. No religious practice should be allowed against the law of the land.

ANJUM M. SAMEL, *Thane*

September 7). To extend reservation to any caste, the main criterion is social or economic backwardness, and in the case of the Patidars neither of the two holds true. The entire episode seems politically motivated to destabilise the BJP government in the state and at the Centre.

K.R. SRINIVASAN, *Secunderabad*

The campaign by the Patels in Gujarat exposes the so-called development model of the state. The deepening economic inequalities were carefully ignored even as Gujarat projected itself as a hub of economic activity. If this model of development was so successful and so transformative, how could a 22-year-old mobilise an entire community to take to the streets?

M.M. GURBAXANI, *Bengaluru*

There is no way a 22-year-old, gun-slinging youth, could have collected 500,000 people at a rally, without support from an experienced politician and huge funding from some big organisations. I am surprised that the vast intelligence apparatus, at the command of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was unable to get any advance warning on what must have been under planning for months.

HARSH KALRA, *via email*

NEW FACE OF TERROR

You can see the fire of Islam glowing in his eyes. His words hit you like jabs, there is so much directness in them. Hafiz Mohammad Sayeed wants One World, One Religion. Even if that means blood must flow in the valleys and mountains of Kashmir, Chechnya, Bosnia, wherever, all the time. Surrounded by some 50 well-armed men covered in green, he tells you matter-of-factly that "all of civilisation must clash until Islam



ARRESTS OF SUSPECTED LEAD MEMBERS SELDOM LEAD THE POLICE ANYWHERE

is accepted everywhere". He believes every word he spews. So do the hundreds of others he leads, men who are based at the Markaz-ul-Dawa-ul-Arshad, the headquarters of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) at Muridke, near Lahore.

Sayeed is the Lashkar flame that glows because there is so much firewood all around, ready to burn for an Azad Kashmir, and now, even beyond.

Like Abu Shamaal, a 25-year-old from Lahore, who was slain in an encounter in Delhi, but not before he and his fidayeen (suicide squad) colleagues managed to gun down two army men inside the Red Fort on December 22.

*by Zahid Hussain and
Surinder Singh Oberoi*
February 26, 2001



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NO COUNTRY FOR RATIONALISTS

Can a log which chisel and hammer cannot split be split with axe and sickle?

Would a mind, which after being chiselled with the nectar of elders' vachanas... yield to the axe and sickle of the Veda and aagama? It will not.

The 17th century vachana poet, Hemagalla Hampa, might well have been writing of the 21st century vachana scholar, M.M. Kalburgi, who was shot dead on August 30. Kalburgi was a Kannada epigrapher, winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award for his collection of essays *Marga 4*, and vice chancellor of Kannada University, Hampi. Can a clear, penetrating mind ever be vanquished by the petty tyrannies and guns of those who claim to own faith? Kalburgi's name will live on, while even the police don't seem to want to know the names of his killers.

In a time of 'godmen' and 'godwomen', who market hope to the stressed and the sorrowful, and the proliferation of those who want to reach God through the ladder of consumption, it's a seemingly uphill task to ask people to have faith in reason alone. These are not good times to be rational, leave alone a rationalist. But as Hampa said: *How can I feel right about gods you sell in your need, and gods you bury for fear of thieves?*

The 12th century Shaivite sharanas who authored the vachanas came from castes and occupations as diverse as cow herding, rope-making, shoe-making, oil milling, and included both women and men. As H.S. Shiva Prakash writes in his survey of medieval Kannada literature in a Sahitya Akademi publication, the sharanas "placed great emphasis on personal experience and the enquiry of truth to the exclusion of slavish dependence upon traditional scriptures and customs. Most, but not all, sharanas rejected temple worship probably because the doors of temples were open only to the high castes".

The *Anubhava Mantapa* or meeting hall set up by Basava, the greatest sharana, was open to men and women of all castes, who argued with each other and criticised superstition. By the 13th century, however, the radical edge of the sharanas had been lost, blunted by upper caste repression, and the appropriation of the sharana tradition by the Veerashaiva priestly class. When Kalburgi's research cast new light on the history of Basava, his wife Neelambike and nephew Channabasava, the Lingayat powers that be were outraged and forced him to recant. But what has been brought to light cannot be erased so easily. Throughout India's history, indeed the history of the world, this has been the story—of a struggle for equality and rationality, its suppression or appropriation by the ruling powers and conservative forces, and its rise again in new forms and by new forces.

Religious intolerance may have managed to kill rationalists such as Kalburgi in Karnataka and Govind Pansare and Narendra Dabholkar in Maharashtra, and forced people such as Sanal Edamaruku, the president of the Indian Rationalist Association, into exile. But will it really be able to destroy the entire history of Indian philosophy, the Charavaka tradition, the Bhakti and Sufi schools, and the critical atheism, agnosticism, pantheism and common sense of millions of ordinary Indians?

While one is optimistic about the future, it cannot be denied that the Hindutva forces pose a clear and present danger. When Bajrang Dal leader Bhuvith Shetty tweets, "Then it was UR Anantamoorthy and now its MM Kalburgi. Mock Hinduism and die a dogs death. And dear K.S Bhagwan your are next (*sic*)", why is Mohan Bhagwat, leader of the RSS, the parent organisation, silent? They are otherwise so busy calling upon others to condemn everything and everyone around them—Muslims must condemn ISIS, human rights groups must condemn Maoists, and so on and on. And even more pertinently, why did neither the PM nor the President condemn this on Teacher's Day, particularly when the men who shot Kalburgi claimed to be his students? For all its protestations of worshipping Saraswati and *shikshaks*, the RSS has never been respectful of teachers in practice. Why else would an ABVP leader accused of being involved in the murder of professor Harbhajan Sabharwal in Ujjain be co-opted, a mere month after his acquittal, to advise the state government on education?

The Hindutva groups want Muslims to 'assimilate' but they cannot be allowed to assimilate so much as to write on the Ramayana, as Malayalam literary critic M.M. Basheer found when he was flooded by abusive phone calls. Even Hindus are not allowed to write on the Ramayana, as one discovered when A.K. Ramanujan's *Three Hundred Ramayanas* was pulled from the DU syllabus. Soon, only the Gita Press version of the *Ramcharitmanas* will be acceptable reading, and the remaining Ramayana scholars can simply retire.

From Basava, however, comes another gem, translated by A.K. Ramanujan, in his *Speaking of Siva*. For those who despair of the present, as well as those who take pride in their violence and control over the state, let both remember that all things pass:

*The rich will make temples for Shiva,
What shall I, a poor man do?*

*My legs are pillars, the body the shrine,
the head a cupola of gold.*

*Listen, O' lord of the meeting rivers,
things standing shall fall, but the moving
ever shall stay.*

Illustration by SAURABH SINGH



**It can't be denied
that the Hindutva
forces pose a clear
and present danger.**

*Nandini Sundar is professor
of sociology, Delhi University*

WIN SOME, LOSE SOME

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar's September 5 announcement on One Rank, One Pension (OROP) may have ended the stir by ex-servicemen but bureaucrats in Arun Jaitley's finance ministry say they are in a spin over this huge outlay of Rs 16,000 crore on OROP and arrears. The bureaucrats, who have long opposed OROP, say they had not prepared for this huge outgo and are now looking for revenue sources. One avenue, they believe could be the 2 per cent Swachh Bharat cess levied on 'elite services' such as hotels and mobile phones. The government will also have to make an additional demand for grants in the winter session of Parliament. There are fears that the government may postpone acting on the report of the Seventh Pay Commission, expected in December, into next year's budgetary cycle.

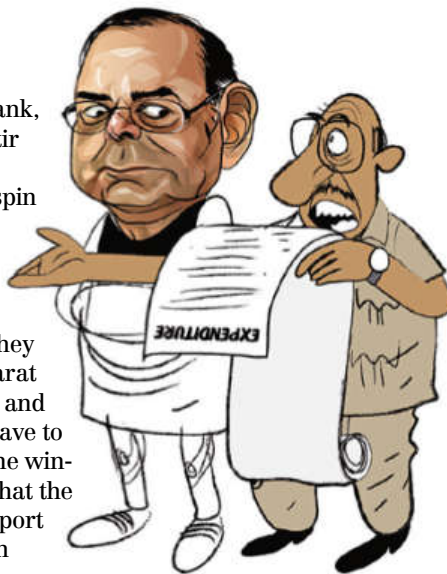


Illustration by SAURABH SINGH



MIFFED MINISTER

Union Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal** is unhappy with the BJP for inducting Congress leader Himanta Sarma. And with nine more Congress MLAs from Assam meeting party chief Amit Shah in Delhi on September 5, the dismay has turned into alarm. The Congress MLAs will join the BJP if they are assured BJP tickets for the 2016 assembly polls. "One doesn't get a ticket at the instruction of the central leadership. Assam BJP has its own tradition," Sonowal told the media in Guwahati. Incidentally, he had defected to the BJP from AGP in 2011.



BACK IN THE GAME

Rahul Gandhi has taken a backseat after recent fiascos such as the defection of Congress leader Himanta Sarma in Assam. This has meant a rise in the fortunes of regional satraps such as former Punjab CM **Amarinder Singh**, who has been demanding a replacement for Punjab Congress chief and Rahul's favourite, Partap Bajwa. Singh is said to have been assured by Congress President Sonia Gandhi that he would be the face of the party's campaign for the 2017 assembly polls in Punjab. He was even assured that a person of his choice would be made the PCC chief. Even though the high command wants Ambika Soni to take charge, Singh doesn't seem convinced.

ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY

Environment Minister **Prakash Javadekar** was pleasantly surprised when a recent strategy meeting with PM Narendra Modi turned into a government campaign. Javadekar wanted to discuss India's strategy for the climate change summit to be held in Paris in December where 196 countries will meet to sign a new agreement. The PM, however, mooted a nationwide campaign on climate change ahead of the Paris conference where India will ask for emission cuts. The PMO has asked its officials to outline the campaign to be flagged off soon.



PRIESTS ON PROTEST PATH



Temple priests in Telangana are protesting against the inordinate delay in increasing their salary by more than 50 per cent to bring it on a par with other state government employees of the Telangana Endowments Department. The department is in a quandary as to how it can meet their demands, particularly when donations from worshippers are insufficient. After a series of protests two months ago, the government assured them of a fair deal. The 6,000-odd staff have set a September 15 deadline after which they plan to intensify their protests.

BABUS VS NETAS



Bureaucrats in J&K are on the warpath. While advocate general Riyaz Ahmad Jan resigned in June, chief secretary **Mohammad Iqbal Khanday** quit in August saying that he had been reduced to a stenographer. Three IAS officers had threatened to resign if they were superseded by their junior, B. R. Sharma, as chief secretary. With the state government appointing Sharma as chief secretary on September 7, it remains to be seen if they make good their threat.



LESSON LEARNT

Akhilesh Yadav's wife Dimple was recently left dumbfounded when students of a government school couldn't name the Uttar Pradesh CM. The Kannauj MP had gone to attend a state health department programme held at a village near Lucknow, where she inspected a primary school. When she asked the children to name the CM, a few students kept quiet while some others said Modi. A miffed Dimple has now declared that she will inspect at least three schools every month to check the quality of education.

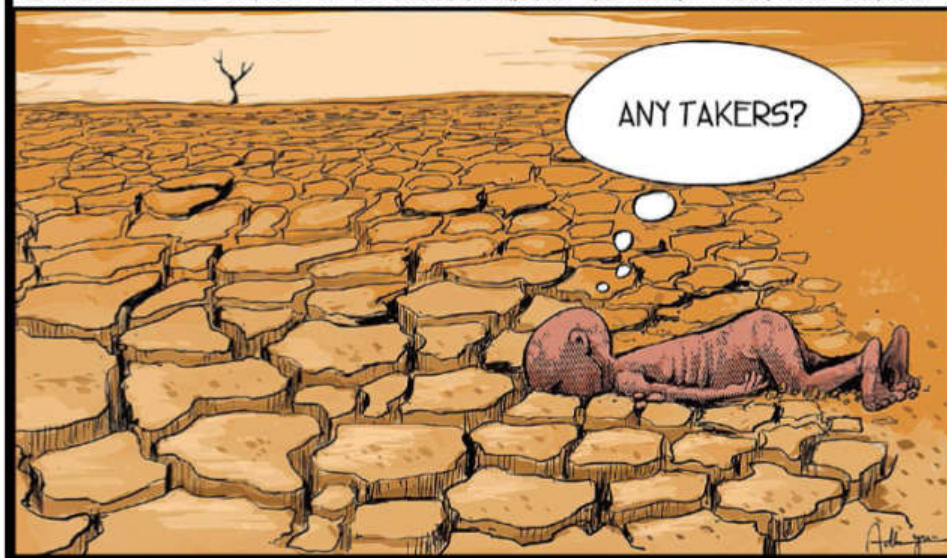
CLIMATE CHANGE

BJP's **Shahnawaz Hussain** woke up to a shock when he saw his bedroom windows covered in thick fog in Bhagalpur. Hussain, who was organising PM Modi's rally in the city that day, thought all his plans had been washed out as it seemed to be raining heavily. But to his relief, it was his AC that had fogged up his windows.



FREE FOR ALL by Sandeep Adhwaryu

MOTHER KILLS SELF IN DROUGHT-HIT MARATHWADA AS SHE COULDN'T FEED HER CHILDREN



AN EXERCISE IN DISCIPLINE

China has showcased its military might with its biggest parade in history at Tiananmen Square on September 3, displaying for the first time its "aircraft carrier-killer" ballistic missile, the DF-21D, new bombers and attack helicopters. Yet the biggest surprise in Beijing was the sight of 50 rather portly PLA generals marching in the midday heat, for the first time in public. President Xi Jinping has reportedly ordered the generals to join their troops and train for months, part of an ongoing campaign to discipline the army. Division heads have been ordered to spend a month every year living as soldiers, away from the palatial compounds some of the top officers have built for themselves.



(FRONT ROW) PLA GENERALS AT THE PARADE

CHUGGING AHEAD

Andhra Pradesh CM **N. Chandrababu Naidu's** proposal for a metro rail project in Vijayawada has been shot down by the Union Ministry of Urban Development headed by M. Venkaiah Naidu. The ministry has said the project was neither financially viable nor did the city have the required population of 20 lakh. Naidu, however, has set August 2018 as the deadline for the first phase of the metro project with an eye on the 2019 assembly polls. He plans to approach Japan for funds and has requested former DMRC chief E. Sreedharan to steer the project.



ON THE MOVE

From boarding the modest Metro to high-flying jet rides, our politicians continue their whirlwind tours



Telangana CM K. Chandrasekhar Rao has chartered a 50-seat **CRJ-100 jet** for Rs 2 crore to fly to a World Economic Forum meet in China on September 7.

J&K Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has ordered 100 SUVs worth Rs 11 crore for MLAs and MLCs.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi rode the Delhi Metro with commuters as he flagged off the Delhi-Faridabad line on September 6.

with ANSHUMAN TIWARI, KAUSHIK DEKA, AMARNATH K. MENON, NASEER GANAI, ASHISH MISRA, ANANTH KRISHNAN AND SANTOSH KUMAR



NEEDED: WOMEN MPs

Not even 30 per cent of the world's lawmakers are women; for India the number is even lower



BELOW AVERAGE

22.3%

Global average of women in parliament*

18.4%

Average in Asia



*Both Houses combined

EVEN LOWER IN INDIA



12.3%
Representation of women in Indian Parliament

LOK SABHA
WOMEN MPs REPRESENTATION
66 **12.2%**

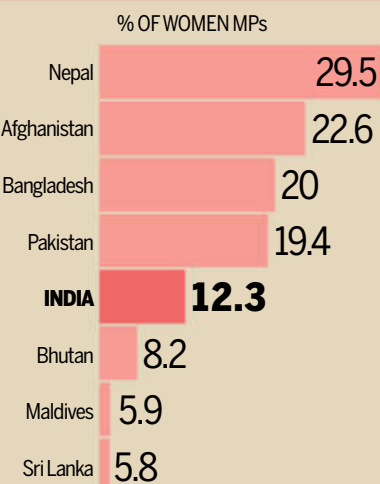


RAJYA SABHA
WOMEN MPs REPRESENTATION
31 **12.7%**



LESSONS FROM NEIGHBOURS

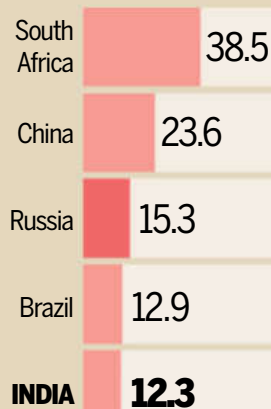
#5 India's rank among eight SAARC countries



STANDING LAST

#5 India's rank among five BRICS countries

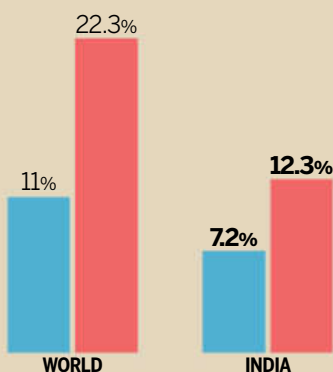
% OF WOMEN MPs



LONG WAY TO GO

Participation of women in Indian parliament has increased at a slower pace than the world

■ 1995 ■ 2015



THE BETTER PERFORMERS

13 Countries where women occupy more than 40% of parliamentary seats

TOP 5 COUNTRIES % OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT



Data as of Aug 1, 2015

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha websites

Story: Rashmi Singh



THE SECRET INDO-PAK TALKS

Why the 2005-08 Back-Channel talks could be a better option for Modi and Sharif

The acrimony and dust kicked up over last month's cancellation of India-Pakistan National Security Adviser-level talks is yet to settle. Meanwhile, a fresh debate has begun over whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi should meet his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif when they are in New York to attend UN meetings later this month. After the spectacular failure of the Ufa agreement to resume talks, the world will certainly be closely watching the behaviour of the two nuclear adversaries as their leaders cross each other's path at the UN. There is growing consternation that in the absence of a formal engagement process and the rise in tensions on the border, another major terror strike in India could trigger the next India-Pakistan conflict.

So should Modi and Sharif meet in New York? Yes, they certainly should. Neither side should view such a meeting as a climbdown. Any opportunity for a face-to-face interaction, even a brief one, always helps to lower tensions and supports India's contention that only a bilateral dialogue can sort out differences between the two countries. India has firmly and correctly ruled out any multilateral or third-party intervention. Both Modi and Sharif have opined at various points that war, whether limited or full-scale, overt or covert, is not and should not be the answer.

Yet even if limited engagements such as what had been planned under Ufa backfire, it begs the question as to how a meaningful dialogue process could be sustained and not degenerate into a war of words. A book titled *Neither a Hawk nor a Dove*, penned by former Pakistani foreign minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri and released in Lahore this week, for the first time provides an in-depth account of the Back-Channel dialogue between the two countries that took place during his tenure between 2005 and 2008. The process does offer both a way, and the hope of how the two countries can gainfully engage with each other.

Away from the media glare and with both sides keeping a lid on the progress of the talks, the two interlocutors, India's Satinder K. Lambah and Pakistan's Tariq Aziz, seemed to have come remarkably close to an agreement on the Kashmir imbroglio. Aziz, a bureaucrat, was a confidant of the then President Pervez Musharraf and secretary of the National Security Council. Lambah, a distinguished former ambassador, was appointed as India's interlocutor by the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

While the broad contours of the discussions have since come out, Kasuri's narrative provides rare insights into how Pakistan handled the talks and worked towards sorting out contentious points. Kasuri writes that Aziz met Lambah over a dozen times quietly in places such as Dubai, Kathmandu and Bangkok. On his return, Aziz would then present a draft of the discussions at a meeting convened by Musharraf at his Rawalpindi residence which included Kasuri, the ISI chief, (Ashfaq Kayani, who would later succeed Musharraf as army chief), the foreign secretary, and the president's chief of staff. After making amendments, Aziz would be given a draft of issues to take up with Lambah.

Lambah remains tight-lipped on the process and outcome of the Back-Channel talks that he participated in. He told INDIA TODAY, "You will appreciate that it is not appropriate for me to comment on decisions taken in the Back Channel or the text of the agreement. The papers in respect of the Back Channel are government property. These were handed over by former PM Manmohan Singh to Prime Minister Modi." The Back-Channel papers that were handed over to Modi by Singh contain a detailed record of the 150 hours of discussions and span a thousand pages. This will prove tremendously useful should Modi decide to pick up the strands from where they were let off.

One of the reasons the talks made so much progress is that the two countries decided to focus on the "core" issues of terror and Kashmir and not go into other outstanding issues such as Siachen, Sir Creek and bilateral trade. It also helped that Musharraf, apart from being president was the army chief, and that the ISI was fully on board so that there was a rare military-civil convergence of purpose. Lambah confirms, "I got a confirmation directly from the top-most level of the Pakistan Army regarding their support for what was being discussed in the Back Channel." Significantly, during the Back-Channel negotiations, Pakistan did not push its maximalist demand of referring the dispute to the UN for a plebiscite or for third-party intervention. Both sides also had tacitly agreed that there would be no redrawing of the borders and that any future agreement should ensure that the LoC acted as a border between the two countries.

Kasuri reveals that the two sides had reached agreement on four major areas. These were:

- **Demilitarisation of Kashmir** Pakistan pushed for demilitarisation of the Valley,



THE BACK-CHANNEL PAPERS THAT WERE HANDED OVER TO MODI BY MANMOHAN SINGH CONTAIN A DETAILED RECORD OF THE 150 HOURS OF DISCUSSIONS. THESE COULD BE VERY USEFUL FOR FUTURE TALKS.

which was a demand then of various Kashmiri separatists groups. Kasuri states that India came forward with a counter-proposal that unless Pakistan withdrew its troops from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (including the Northern Areas), there was no way India could consider it. After protracted negotiations, it was decided that both sides would agree to a gradual but major reduction of forces particularly from population centres “in consonance with the situation on the ground”. Lambah refuses to confirm or deny this major concession. But at a seminar in Srinagar in May 2014, while discussing the contours of a solution, including reduction of forces, Lambah pointed out that “the essential prerequisite for reduction of forces is that there has to be an end to hostility, violence and terrorism”.

● **Curbing Terrorism** Kasuri does acknowledge that containing cross-border terrorism was a prerequisite and writes, “We realised fairly early that the peace process with India would not survive, let alone thrive, unless cross-LoC movement was controlled.” He claimed a major programme was launched by Pakistan to de-radicalise militants, disengage them from their current activities and rehabilitate them to become “useful” members of society. As proof, Kasuri points out that during that period, the Indian Army had itself reported that infiltration across the LoC had “come down to zero”. The Indian forces though maintain that it was because of its counter-terrorism measures and not because of any Pakistani let-up. But it remains a fact that there were only a few ceasefire violations across the LoC and the border was quiet while the negotiations were on.

● **Self-Governance** Among the most contentious issues was the demand by Pakistan for self-governance of Kashmir that had always been viewed by India as a ploy to loosen Delhi’s grip on the Valley. During the Back-Channel talks, Kasuri states that India insisted Pakistan does the same in all the territories of J&K under its occupation, including the Northern Areas of Gilgit and Baltistan. Pakistan balked because, over the years, it had systematically separated the two areas from each other. The Northern Areas were its strategic soft-spot as it adjoined China’s Xinjiang, but it eventually came around and agreed. On the issue of self-governance, Lambah refuses to comment but it is learnt that what India was ready to agree to didn’t conflict with any provision of the Indian Constitution.

● **Joint Mechanism** As hotly disputed was the idea of establishing a joint-mechanism, which Kasuri states was part of the negotiations “through which Kashmiris on both sides could cooperate in specified areas of mutual interest and where Indians and Pakistanis would also be present in one form of the other”. Musharraf was keen on the process

and it was viewed as another way to gradually loosen the Indian government’s hold over the Valley. Lambah doesn’t want to join issue on this but from his Srinagar speech it is apparent that while India agreed to consider such a mechanism it was only to be an advisory body meant to look at socio-economic issues such as tourism, travel, pilgrimages, trade, health and education.

The crowning achievement if all these measures were implemented, Kasuri states, was for India and Pakistan to sign an all-new Treaty for Peace, Security and Friendship that “would have led to permanent peace” between the two countries. Interestingly, Kasuri claims that the Back-Channel talks had major political support in both countries, including the BJP in India. In his book he refers to a 2007 meeting with Brajesh Mishra, the National Security Adviser during A.B. Vajpayee’s regime, in which he told him, “Kasuri Sahib, *woh toh humein karna tha aur karenge, aap zara dheere dheere chalein* (It was we who were supposed to do that and we will when we are in power next time...please go slow).”

Kasuri claims that the Back-Channel agreement would have been signed but for the Mumbai attacks in 2008 that put the clock back on relations. Lambah disputes the assertion and states that “it was the dismissal of the Chief Justice of Pakistan in 2007 by Musharraf that slowed down the process”. Events then spun out of Musharraf’s control and led to his removal. About Kasuri’s overall assessment, Lambah asserts that

“this is not a correct perspective of what exactly is included in the agreement, particularly in respect of what he has written on self-governance, joint mechanism and demilitarisation. Perhaps as an experienced politician he has done so deliberately”.

It is apparent though that the two countries had made considerable progress and came close to reaching an agreement on Kashmir although events and fate willed otherwise. Lambah did continue the Back-Channel talks with the Asif Zardari-led government after Musharraf fell and more recently with Sharif before Modi came to power but it lacked the vigour with which it had been pursued then. However, the threads of a solution can now be picked up by both Modi and Sharif. Perhaps a Back-Channel format such as the Lambah-Aziz dialogue may be a more viable option than a high-decibel, diplomatic slanging match that typifies formal talks. It is something for the two leaders to discuss if they decide to meet in New York for a *chai pe charcha*.

Follow the writer on Twitter @rajchenggappa



لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

HAFIZ SAEED AT A
FEBRUARY 2014
RALLY IN LAHORE



INSIDE JIHAD CENTRAL

While bilateral talks remain a non-starter, JuD chief Hafiz Saeed, the man who could trigger the next **India-Pakistan** war, keeps bolstering his terror infrastructure under the benign gaze of 'state actors'

By Kaswar Klasra in Lahore and
Sandeep Unnithan in New Delhi

The midday buzz in Lahore's Qudsia mosque dissolves into pin-drop silence when Maulana Hafiz Saeed, alleged mastermind of the November 26, 2008, attack on Mumbai, rises to deliver his Friday sermon. Clad in his trademark white salwar kurta that rises above his ankles, the preacher supports his portly frame on a four-foot-long knobbed wooden stick, a constant reminder of a recent spinal ailment. The frailty is an illusion. "Kashmiri sisters and brothers need you. Get up and join us to take the bull by the horns," Saeed roars into the microphones in chaste Urdu. "Are you listening to me? Why don't you hear the screams of our Kashmiri sisters and mothers? It is time to act. Join us to wage jihad against India," the Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) Amir's high-pitched voice reverberates around the green-hued main hall.

A sea of white salwar kurtas,

nearly 2,000 young people who have streamed in from across the country, respond by silently raising their hands.

Today is special. It is Pakistan's 68th Independence Day. But the target of Saeed's fury is across the international border, 24 km away. A border which, Saeed promises, will soon be erased. "Ghazwa-e-Hind is inevitable," Saeed thunders, predicting an apocalyptic battle that will vanquish India. He shifts the stick from his hands and drives it into the wooden stage like a stake. "Kashmir can be freed through an armed struggle only...1971 will be avenged only if you join us in jihad against India, the U.S. and Israel."

Six refrigerator-sized tower air-conditioners pump cool air to sharply reduce the oppressive humid heat outside. Saeed is a man with Pakistan's biggest reward—the US State Department put out a \$10 million (Rs 66 crore) bounty for information leading to his arrest in 2012. Exactly who would arrest him is possibly a

thought that crosses his mind often. The provincial police provide him security wherever he goes. He rides in a convoy of sleek white bullet- and bomb-proof Land Cruisers, what would pass for Z-plus security in India. One of the vehicles has a jammer—antennae that disrupt radio signals that could trigger bombs planted by would-be assassins. He is guarded round-the-clock by a phalanx of 24 fierce-looking bodyguards in brown salwar suits. "India cannot even touch my feet," he smiles when asked if he fears an Abbottabad-style raid (*see interview*). Bollywood director Kabir Khan is perhaps the closest an Indian has come to unnerving him. On August 10, Saeed petitioned the Lahore High Court for a ban on the Khan-directed vengeance-fantasy Bollywood film *Phantom* where an actor playing him is killed onscreen. The film, Saeed said through his lawyer, defamed the JuD and Pakistan.

Meanwhile, clinching evidence,



collected from Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror strikes in Gurdaspur on July 27 and Udhampur on August 5 this year, formed part of the dossiers that India's National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval was to hand over to his Pakistani counterpart Sartaj Aziz. The NSA-level talks scheduled for August 24 in New Delhi were aborted two days prior to it after Pakistan pulled out citing "India imposing pre-conditions".

Besides evidence of Dawood Ibrahim's whereabouts in Karachi, the dossier included the interrogation report of Mohammed Naved Yakub, the Pakistani terrorist caught in Udhampur after attacking a Border Security Force (BSF) convoy. Naved revealed he was 'launched' from Halan in Pakistan by Hafiz Saeed's son Talha for a major *fidayeen* strike in Jammu and Kashmir.

THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF TERROR

When India talks of terror being on top of the agenda with Pakistan, it usually means the activities of the LeT. The "infrastructure of terror", another recurring theme in India's diplomatic missives to Pakistan, refers to the LeT's training camps active in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan's Punjab province.

The July 10 joint declaration by Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Nawaz Sharif in Ufa agreed to "discuss terrorism in all its forms" precisely because non-state actors such as the LeT can wreck the dialogue.

With the exception of the December 2001 attack on India's Parliament carried out by the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), a majority of the sensational terror strikes on mainland India have been the LeT's handiwork.

"The LeT is the most potent terror threat that we have to face and is likely to be the source of any future attack," says a senior home ministry official.

A 2014 paper by Surinder Kumar Sharma and Anshuman Behera of the New Delhi-based Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) says the LeT is dangerous because its operational reach and capability is transnational and it continues to enjoy the patronage of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan Army and

Saudi Arabia.

Much to New Delhi's dismay, the LeT has weathered every storm. Right from the US designating it a terrorist organisation in 2001—after which it renamed itself the JuD—and squeezing its funding. The LeT was unaffected by the nationwide crackdown on militant groups following the December 16, 2014 massacre of 132 schoolchildren in Peshawar by Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants. An August 24 notification published in newspapers by the National Crisis Management Cell of

Pakistan's Ministry of Interior listed 61 terrorist organisations. Sixty of them, including the JeM, the TTP and the LeT had been banned. Only one group, the JuD, was "under observation".

This status is unlikely to change, India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) officials say. The LeT is a veritable arm of the Pakistani deep state—the ISI. In 2010, arrested LeT operative David Coleman Headley told NIA officials in the US that every LeT leader, even Hafiz Saeed, had an ISI handler, to ensure the

INTERVIEW **HAFIZ SAEED** JUD CHIEF

"INDIA DOESN'T HAVE THE GUTS TO TOUCH ME"

In an exclusive interview to Kaspar Klarsa, the JuD chief Hafiz Saeed denies his organisation's links with the Lashkar-e-Taiba. He criticises the Nawaz Sharif government for extending a hand of friendship to India instead of liberating Kashmir from "Indian occupation". Flanked by Yahya Mujahideen, spokesperson of his organisation and one of his trusted aides, Saeed, India's most wanted man, boldly admits that his organisation has been actively supporting armed struggle in Kashmir since 2002—and it will continue to do so.

Q. Your speeches revolve around Kashmir and India. Why?

A. Let me tell you that Kashmir has been a part of Pakistan and still is. Sadly, it was the responsibility of the government of Pakistan to take steps on war footing to free Kashmir from Indian occupation. Instead, we are fighting (through militancy) Pakistan's war in Kashmir as the government has

seemingly abandoned Kashmir. And we will keep on fighting until our aim is fulfilled. Backed by the US and Israel, India is Pakistan's bitter enemy. We will not rest until (our) *fidayeen* hoist Pakistan's flag atop New Delhi's Parliament.

Q. Is the LeT, an organisation you founded, involved in the 26/11 attack on Mumbai.

A. *Koi aur baat karte hain...* (Let us discuss something else).

Q. But aren't you the head of the LeT?

A. I'm not a part of the LeT. It's just a Kashmir-based group taking on Indian forces. The LeT chief (Lakhvi) has told me that they weren't behind the 26/11 attack.

Q. Indian leaders have warned of covert operations such as the one the US carried out to get Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad. Your response to these threats.

A. (Smiles) I have come across statements of some Indian ministers asking their government to launch a covert operation to get hold of

Pakistan Army retained control over the group.

Unlike non-state actors such as the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) which assassinated Punjab (Pakistan) home minister Shuja Khanzada on August 16 in revenge for their chief Malik Ishaq's 'encounter' killing, the LeT has never turned on the Pakistani state.

An Indian intelligence analyst says the LeT today is far bigger than a ragged non-state actor being reared by the deep state. "The LeT is a three-dimensional politico-religious outfit with its own armed wing, a 'Sunni

Hezbollah'," he says, comparing it to Lebanon's powerful Iran-backed Shia insurgent group.

JuD social media sites overflow with propaganda about its volunteers administering aid during natural disasters. A JuD spokesperson says their medical wing has a 188-ambulance fleet along with dozens of blood banks set up across Pakistan. The group provides monthly provisions and cash donations to more than 40,000 orphans and widows. Widows are given job opportunities, orphans are given free education. This charity, Indian officials

say, hides a not-so-unknown fact. The LeT continues to run 14 terrorist training camps in PoK and Punjab. Youths are vacuumed from the poorer regions of Pakistan's provinces and run through three-month military-style training courses and injected across the border for attacks on India. The latest, Mohammed Naved Yakub, 21, a resident of Faisalabad, Pakistan, was arrested by security forces in Jammu's Udhampur district on August 5 after attacking a bus carrying BSF personnel. Pakistan's foreign office denied he is a Pakistani national.

LeT fighters make up a majority of the 70-odd foreign militants, mostly of Pakistani origin, still active in Jammu and Kashmir. There are an estimated 200 militants still active, majority of them of Kashmiri origin. Only the LeT, however, retains the ability to divert its fighters to attacks elsewhere in India. The 10 terrorists who attacked Mumbai on November 26, 2008, in which 166 people were killed, were originally trained for fighting in Kashmir.

Captured militants have revealed that the camps are now shrinking from the heyday of the 1990s where hundreds of militants were trained. They are now smaller and host smaller batches of less than 50 recruits. But there is no mistaking the lethality of their graduates.

Three suspected LeT terrorists attacked a bus, planted explosives on a railway track and finally stormed a police station in Gurdaspur, Punjab, on July 27, before being gunned down.

Ujjwal Nikam, special public prosecutor in the 26/11 trial, has no hesitation in calling Saeed the mastermind of the plot. Three accused in the case—Ajmal Kasab, the lone terrorist who was captured alive in the 26/11 attack, plotters Abu Jundal and Headley named Saeed as the LeT supremo. "Kasab told us that Saeed visited camps where he was trained with the other attackers and gave them motivational lectures," says Nikam. Pakistan's response has been that there has been no evidence directly linking Saeed to the attack. It, instead, arrested the military commander Zaki-ur Rehman Lakhvi and six



KASWAR KLASRA

me. I have a message for them: they shouldn't even think of touching my feet. It needs guts to do so. Why does India want me? What wrong have I done to Indians? Please ask them to approach the courts if they have something against me.

Q. India believes your group is backed by the ISI and is also linked to al Qaeda.

What do you have to say?

A. I don't care what others say about me and my organisation. I'm chief of a charity organisation which runs 140 schools, a dozen

medical dispensaries, colleges and small hospitals. We don't have any connection with the ISI or the al Qaeda.

Q. Who funds the JuD?

A. I'm grateful to Allah almighty for putting sympathies into the hearts of Pakistanis for my group. It's their donations which keep us afloat.

Q. Will you accept an offer to visit India?

A. I have no issue with that. Ask them to send an invitation through proper channels.



Graphic by SAURABH SINGH

NON-STATE ACTOR?

JUD CHIEF HAFIZ SAEED IS AMONG PAKISTAN'S
MOST HEAVILY GUARDED LEADERS



BULLET- AND BOMB-
PROOF 2014 EDITION OF
TOYOTA LAND CRUISER
COST: \$1.6 MN

IED JAMMER VEHICLE
COST: \$1.2 MN

BULLET- AND BOMB-
PROOF TOYOTA PRADOS

CLOSE PROTECTION GROUP OF
20 TRAINED COMMANDOS

others in 2008. Seven years later, the 26/11 trial in Pakistan is yet to begin, another irritant in India-Pakistan ties. On April 10, Lakhvi was released on bail after a seven-year prison spell in Lahore's Adiala jail.

THE RECRUITMENT MACHINE

Hafiz Saeed's fiery Friday sermons with their fist-waving, India-hating invectives are a staple in Lahore. Almost as common as the bustling *jummah* markets outside. But it is what happens after he has finished speaking that is interesting.

Saeed's audience of youngsters file out of the hall and make their way outside, past a library selling jihadi literature, cheap CDs with Saeed's speeches, Islamic books and T-shirts inscribed with 'India ka jo yaar hai, gaddar hai, gaddar hai' (A friend of India is a traitor) and 'Jihad is my life'. They approach three JuD volunteers sitting behind small tables. The youths queue up to pen down names, addresses, contact numbers and educational qualifications on bulky registers the size of coffee tables. It is the closest to

a JuD employment exchange. One of the young men in the queue is Ismael Khan, 21, a bearded, lanky six-footer, heavily built with sallow cheeks. He wears his trousers high above his ankles in the style of devout Muslims. Saeed's speech has had an impact on the physics-mathematics graduate from the government college in Khairpur. Ismael Khan says he wants to join JuD to play his part to "free his Kashmiri brothers and sisters from India". He will not say how. "I've travelled 1,300 km to reach Lahore only to offer my services to JuD. Wish me luck please," says the youngster from

a lower-middle-class Sindhi family.

Ismael Khan and 70 other youngsters were bundled into a minibus hired by a local JuD leader in Sindh's Khairpur district.

Khan's journey up the A8 motorway is testimony to Hafiz Saeed's draw among Pakistan's middle and lower classes, a third of the country's population. This is also the catchment area for the LeT which has over two decades sent militants into Jammu and Kashmir and more recently mounted attacks on Mumbai and Gurdaspur. There are whispers that the JuD evaluates each recruit who has signed up and assesses where they will be most suited—charity work in Pakistan or in the rugged training camps of Muzaffarabad where they will be 'launched' against India.

A senior Pakistani government official believes recruits do not stay with the banned outfit for life. "Most young recruits join under influence of Hafiz Saeed," he admits. "They do not join it for a career in terrorism. They join it motivated in equal part by religious conviction, a desire for

**LIKE SHORT-SERVICE
MILITARY PERSONNEL, THE
YOUNG MEN RECRUITED
FOR JuD RETURN TO THEIR
NORMAL LIVES AFTER TWO
YEARS WITH THE OUTFIT.**



adventure and a sense of purpose. Most recruits leave after two years of fighting across the border to return home,” says an official source.

Saeed feigns ignorance when asked about his organisation’s armed wing. The LeT, according to him, is an organisation fighting for the liberation of Kashmir. But strangely for a humanitarian charity doing social work, the JuD’s flag features a black scimitar set above six black pillars. There are only five pillars of Islam. The sixth, is a recurring theme in all of Saeed’s speeches: Jihad or Holy War.

Pakistan froze JuD’s assets and accounts following a UN Security Council resolution in 2011. Neither did this nor the US actions, affect the group’s financial position. The JuD and its affiliated charitable organisations expanded their reach within Pakistan. “The group raises funds through charity. A major portion of funds came from donations by Pakistanis working abroad,” says Asad Rana, a Lahore-based security analyst.

The JuD runs 140 schools in Pakistan which offer free education, boarding, lodging and a modest monthly stipend. It has established state-of-the-art hospitals in Muridke, Balakot, Mansehra, Muzaffarabad, Lahore, Gujranwala, Karachi and Hyderabad, equipped with the latest medical equipment. JuD-run hospitals offer free liver transplant and eye laser surgery. The group has plans to build a cancer hospital.

HANDLING THE LeT

An option to covertly target the LeT leadership, not unlike that suggested in the Bollywood movie *Phantom*, was briefly discussed but swiftly abandoned by Indian security agencies after the 26/11 Mumbai attack. Since then, India’s thrust against the LeT-JuD combo has been diplomatic and legal.

A three-pronged strategy to mount international

pressure and put the spotlight on the terrorist groups in Pakistan, get it to bring the perpetrators of the Mumbai attack to justice and get the civilian establishment to curtail the use of terror as a strategic weapon, has been underway since 2008.

This move has met with mixed success. The US has, over the years, put pressure by squeezing the LeT’s finances and designating its affiliates as terrorist organisations. Last year, it designated two of its key fundraisers, Nazir Ahmad Chaudhry and Muhammad Hussein Gill, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists.

“We will continue to target LeT’s financial foundation to impede its violent activities,” said US Under

Secretary of Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence David S. Cohen in Washington in June 2014.

In June this year, India approached the United Nations Security Council’s 1267 committee—which requires all states to take action against individuals or entities associated with the al Qaeda—to question Pakistan on the release of Lakhvi. The matter came before the committee but was placed on “technical hold” by China.

Former Indian high commissioner to Pakistan, G. Parthasarathy, calls for measures that would make it difficult for Saeed to move about freely, preaching hatred. “He must be forced into hiding, like the indicted criminal Dawood Ibrahim. That will have a psychological impact on him and his followers,” he says.

India pulled off a minor diplomatic coup during PM Modi’s recent two-day state visit to the UAE. A joint statement issued by India and the UAE on August 16 triggered consternation within Pakistan. In the joint statement, which all but named Pakistan, both sides agreed to “denounce and oppose terrorism in all forms and manifestations, wherever committed and by whomever, calling on all states to reject and abandon the use of terrorism against other countries, dismantle terrorism infrastructures where they exist, and bring perpetrators of terrorism to justice.” It has set the pitch for Pakistan’s isolation from one country belonging to the influential Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) at least on the issue of terrorism. “It is the NDA government’s biggest step to isolate Pakistan internationally on the issue of terrorism,” says BJP leader Seshadri Chari.

Clearly, it will take more than diplomacy to deter Hafiz Saeed and his non-state actors.

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INDIA PULLED OFF A MINOR DIPLOMATIC COUP DURING PM MODI’S RECENT TWO-DAY STATE VISIT TO THE UAE WHEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ISSUED A JOINT STATEMENT DENOUNCING TERRORISM OF ALL KINDS.

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CAPTURED PAKISTANI TERRORIST MOHAMMED NAVED YAKUB



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THE LASHKAR'S EMPIRE OF JIHAD

How Pakistan's intelligence agency created a pliant proxy and implacable foe of India

By C. Christine Fair

In 1984, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi assembled a small group of Pakistani Ahl-e-Hadith adherents to wage jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan. A year later, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed and Zafar Iqbal, two professors from the Islamic studies department of Lahore Engineering University, formed the Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD), a small group that was primarily focused upon *tabligh* (proselytisation) or *dawa* (missionary work) aiming to propagate the Ahl-e-Hadith creed. In 1986, Lakhvi merged his militia with JuD to create the Markaz Daawat-ul-Irshad (MDI). MDI had three functions: jihad, proselytisation of the Ahl-e-Hadith *maslak*, and the creation of a new generation of Muslims committed to their ideology. Within one year of forming, MDI established its first militant training camp, Muaskar-e-Taiba, in the Afghan province of Paktia, and established another camp, Muaskar-e-Aqsa, in Kunar.

After the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, internecine warfare erupted among the different mujahideen leaders in Afghanistan. MDI opposed this development and shifted its focus to Indian-administered Kashmir. To do so, it established several training camps in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. In 1990, MDI launched its first mission in Kashmir when its operatives ambushed a jeep that was carrying Indian Air Force personnel travelling towards Srinagar airport. While attacks on Indian security forces by Kashmiri militants had become commonplace by 1990, the accuracy of this assault by a hitherto unknown

militant group was unprecedented. In the early 1990s, MDI segmented its activities and organisational structure. While it continued the mission of proselytisation and education, it hived off Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) as a tightly related militant wing. However, Saeed was the leader (*amir*) of both organisations, attesting to the degree to which it was nearly impossible to distinguish MDI and LeT.

THE ISI PICKS THE LeT

The Pakistani army and the intelligence agency it runs, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate or ISI, did not create the LeT; but they did believe that LeT, with its demonstrable superior capabilities, would intensify the conflict in Kashmir and expand the geographical expanse of the insurgency. From the early 1990s, the ISI and the Pakistani army invested heavily in LeT. The army helped to build LeT's military apparatus specifically for use against India and it designed LeT's military training regime. It co-located army and ISI personnel at LeT training bases to help execute the regime

and to train the organisation's trainers and this remains true to date. All senior leaders have ISI handlers, even Saeed himself.

Pakistan's investments paid off: within a few years, the LeT became the biggest challenge to the Indian security forces in Kashmir prior to the introduction of the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) many years later. In 1999, LeT introduced a new kind of attack in Indian-administered Kashmir: the *fidayeen* attack. By introducing the *fidayeen* attack, the LeT and its Pakistani handlers aimed to reverse a three-year decline in militant activity in Indian-administered Kashmir. LeT's *fidayeen* missions are not "suicide attacks", rather, high-risk missions in which well-trained commandos engage in fierce combat during which dying is preferred to being captured.

SLEIGHT OF BAN

In December 2001, Pakistan banned LeT, along with several other militant groups, after JeM attacked the Indian Parliament earlier that month, bringing India and Pakistan to the brink of war. These bans deceived no one. Pakistan's intelligence agencies alerted the soon-to-be banned organisations of the upcoming proscription, providing them ample time to transfer their assets to new accounts and to reorganise and relaunch under new names. In the case of LeT, Saeed announced the organisation had been restructured and would operate as JuD. Since then, Pakistan has not made any pretence of further restrictions on the organisation. It resists all pressure from the US,

LET'S FIDAYEEN MISSIONS ARE HIGH-RISK MISSIONS IN WHICH WELL-TRAINED COMMANDOS ENGAGE IN FIERCE COMBAT DURING WHICH DYING IS PREFERRED TO BEING CAPTURED.

INTELLIGENCE

Azam Cheema aka 'Babaji'

Operates from Bahawalpur, Punjab province. Main accused in the 2006 serial blasts on Mumbai local trains.

EXTERNAL OPERATIONS

Sajid Mir

Secretary to Abdul Rehman Makki. Recruited, handled and trained key 26/11 plotter David Headley. Also scouted potential targets in India during an India-Pakistan cricket match in 2005.

TRAINING CAMPS

Mian Abdullah

Close associate of Saeed, worked as trainer under him at an LeT camp in Afghanistan. Later, commander of the LeT camp in Peshawar. Headed training camps after Lakhvi's arrest.

KASHMIR UNIT

Maulana Abdul Aziz Alvi

Resident of Ganderbal near Srinagar where he was a religious leader.

PUNJAB UNIT

Nasir Javid

Resident of Gujranwala, Punjab province. Operational commander from 2001-2008. Also in charge of 'Daura-e-Aam' course at an LeT camp in PoK.

COMMUNICATIONS

Zarar Shah

Set up the communication network and the control room in Karachi that allowed the 26/11 terrorists to be in constant touch with their handlers in Pakistan.

THE TERROR SYNDICATE

THE LE T'S ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE HAS WEATHERED THE GLOBAL OUTRAGE OVER THE MUMBAI 26/11 ATTACK AND MORE RECENTLY, PAKISTAN'S DRIVE AGAINST TERRORISTS AT HOME.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Abdul Rehman Makki

Cousin and brother-in-law of Saeed. No. 2 in the hierarchy. Former teacher at the Medina university, Saudi Arabia.

TRAINING CAMP, DULAI

Yusuf alias Muzammil

Heads one of the LeT's largest training camps in PoK. Expert in tactical training and pre-assault reconnaissance. Coordinated 26/11 attack from Lahore.

AMIR OF JuD AND LeT

HAFIZ MUHAMMAD SAEED

EXTERNAL WING AND PUBLICATIONS

Amir Hamza

Afghan jihad veteran. Runs proxy organisation called Tehreek Hurmat-e-Rasool.

MILITARY WING (LeT), KASHMIR OPERATIONS

Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi

Veteran of military operations in Chechnya, Bosnia and Afghanistan. Was jailed by Pakistani authorities after the 26/11 attack. Got bail in April.

SPOKESPERSON

Yahya Mujahid

General secretary. Extremely close to Saeed.

Source: Militant groups in South Asia, Surinder Kumar Sharma, Anshuman Behera and IDSA



Britain, the European Union, India and the United Nations to do so.

Even after the sanguinary attack on a military school in Peshawar in December 2014 when Pakistani officials vowed it would no longer distinguish between good terrorists and bad, LeT (aka JuD) was never at risk. After all, the Pakistani deep state does not consider this organisation to be “terrorist”. In fact, Saeed widely claimed that the attack was done by Indian proxies and soon after the school attack, Lakhvi, the mastermind of the November 2008 attack on Mumbai, was granted bail. Lakhvi had been in jail, which was really a form of protective custody, since 2008.

NEW VISTAS OF JIHAD

By 2005, the LeT formally sanctioned its cadres to go to Afghanistan to fight with the Afghan Taliban where they engaged US/International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Afghan and Indian targets. The LeT was not enthusiastic about doing so because it feared that extensive involvement in the Afghanistan insurgency would require its cadres to work with and through the various Deobandi groups who were at war with the Pakistani state.

The LeT entered the Afghan insurgency for several reasons. First, Pakistan was forced to retard Kashmir operations after the JeM attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001 and the LeT attack on Indian military families in Kaluchak (in Kashmir) in 2002. Under significant US pressure, General Pervez Musharraf adopted the so-called “moderated jihad” strategy which denied LeT and other jihadi groups access to this prized theatre. The organisation, seeking to retain fighters as well as experienced commanders who were anxious to engage in active combat, found Afghanistan a welcoming theatre. Second, the notion of fighting the infidels in Afghanistan was very attractive to many militants in Pakistan and the LeT, like its Deobandi counterparts, succumbed to those demands. Third, some of the organisation’s donors believed that Afghanistan was a more important theatre than Kashmir after the ouster of the Taliban and al Qaeda and the subsequent occupation of the

EVEN AFTER THE SCHOOL ATTACK IN PESHAWAR, WHEN PAKISTANI OFFICIALS VOWED THEY WOULDN'T DISTINGUISH BETWEEN GOOD TERRORISTS AND BAD, LET WAS NEVER AT RISK.

country by American and ISAF forces. Fourth, under the US security umbrella, India was able to establish a robust presence in Afghanistan which was a perennial irritant to Pakistan. And most importantly, the ISI sanctioned the organisation’s expanded role in Afghanistan where it, along with the Haqqani network, became Pakistan’s most important assets with which it could attack Indian and international military targets in Afghanistan.

THE LeT’S DOMESTIC POLITICS

Most analysts of the LeT view the organisation as a terrorist organisation that Pakistan uses to secure its interests in India, and to some extent and more recently, in Afghanistan. However, the LeT has an important and growing domestic political role within Pakistan in that it is the only organisation to offer ideological resistance to the Deobandi violent agenda that is savaging Pakistanis and the state. It is critical to note that the groups that have turned on the state are Deobandi and Deobandis commit most of the sectarian and communal attacks in Pakistan. The JuD vigorously opposes attacking Pakistanis, which makes it an important tool in the hands of the deep state that is seeking to regain the upper hand over its Deobandi proxies who have turned against the state.

Curiously, very little reliable information about the organisation’s structure is available in the public domain despite the critical threat it poses to regional and international security. Estimates of its active cadres range from a high end of 50,000 to a low estimate of several thousands. Saeed

is the leader of the organisation. He exercises extremely tight control over the organisation which is compartmentalised into numerous departments that concern jihad, education, charity, religious affairs and social welfare. To ensure maximal compliance with his diktats, Saeed appoints family members or close associates to key positions who answer directly to him. His tight top-down control over the organisation and emplacement of close associates explains why it has not experienced the fissures and subsequent rebellions against the state that the various Deobandi organisations have experienced whose command and control structures are more delegated. Sajid Mir is the commander of overseas operations. Mir became notorious in 2008 because he was the “project manager” for the 2008 Mumbai attack. From his redoubts in Pakistan, he personally directed the killing spree through his continuous phone conversations with the attackers.

Within Indian-administered Kashmir, the organisation has a chief operations commander for the Valley as well as regional division

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commanders for the central, north and south divisions. These commands are further divided into area commands for smaller geographical areas.

FINANCING THE ARMY OF THE PURE

The JuD primarily uses its funds for three purposes: *dawa* (preaching), *khidmat* (provision of social services), and jihad-related activities (recruitment, training, and procurement of equipment and weapons). Unfortunately, it is impossible to know with certainty what the total operating budget for JuD is and how much of that budget comes directly from the state and how much of that is secured through the organisation's own fundraising activities. It is estimated that the LeT's annual operations budget is about \$50 million of which about \$5.2 million is dedicated to military operations. With this operating budget, the group runs numerous training centres all over Pakistan. It's estimated that the organisation spends \$330 on each recruit undertaking the group's Daura-e-Aam (basic) course and about \$1,700 per cadre enrolled in the Daura-e-Khaas (advanced

three-month course).

It is unlikely that the state has to provide the full operating budget because the organisation has a massive fundraising capability through its domestic and foreign charity solicitations, online solicitations, the sales of its numerous publications, its annual collection of sacrificial animal pelts among other lucrative endeavours. Astonishingly, the federal and (Pakistani) Punjab governments provide overt support to the organization even though it has been declared a terrorist organisation by the United Nations and the United States.

THE FUTURE OF THE LeT IN INDIA

The LeT, so far, is the leading terrorist group in South Asia. Organisationally, it has no significant ties to al Qaeda or its competitor, the Islamic State. In fact, allying itself to either of these groups would jeopardise its most important assets: unfettered support from the Pakistani state. However, the Islamic State has upped the ante in terms of the viciousness of violence. Whereas al Qaeda and LeT stunned the world with their ability to stage coordinated,

multi-site, simultaneous attacks, the Islamic State focuses media attention upon such brutality that even the Taliban and al Qaeda have denounced the Islamic State as barbaric savages disgracing the name of Islam. However, the brutality of Islamic State does put pressure on other terrorist groups to increase their barbarism. After all, all Islamist militant groups are competing for market share of funds and cadres. In some respects, the Islamic State has shown that it need not win hearts and minds: it need only terrorise populations into succumbing to their brutality. This leaves open the possibility that the LeT may also seek to deepen its own savagery, which is substantial. After all, it has had a long history of beheading people. Meeting or exceeding the brutality of the Islamic State is well within LeT's performance envelope.

While Indians are possibly correct to anticipate that the next attack on India may well come from the LeT, I encourage Indians to also remember the JeM which launched the attack on India's Parliament. The JeM had been dormant for years in part because its cadres had defected to the Pakistani Taliban. In recent years, the Pakistani army and ISI have resuscitated JeM in hopes of getting some of the erstwhile cadres back into the fold with the lure of killing Indians. The JeM, it should be recalled, conducted its first attack—a suicide bombing in 2000—in Kashmir. And, unlike LeT, it has long had ties to al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban, once the world leaders in murderous brutality, and JeM's operatives have been working with the Pakistani Taliban whose attacks have been nearly as savage as that of Islamic State. Indians would be wise to keep an eye on the JeM in addition to the LeT. The Pakistani army and the ISI need both of these groups if their twin goals of pacifying Pakistan and setting India on fire are to be advanced.

SECURITY FORCES PERSONNEL AFTER AN ENCOUNTER WITH MILITANTS AT DINANAGAR IN GURDASPUR



C. Christine Fair is an associate professor at the Georgetown University's Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. This article is from her forthcoming book Lashkar-e-Taiba in its Own Words. For a complete list of references for this column, go to www.indiatoday.in/ccfair

FEAR OF THE FOREIGN HANDOUT

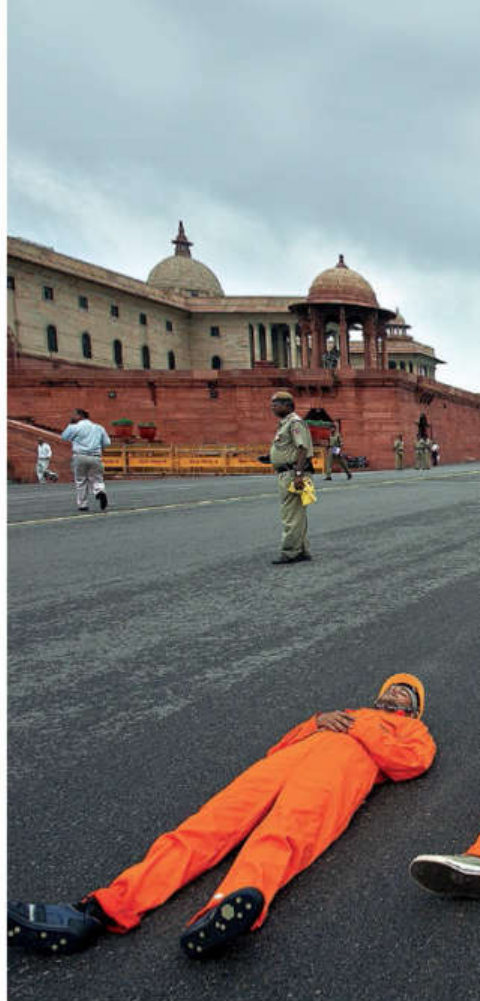
Clampdown on foreign funding of NGOs for alleged misuse opens government to charges of gagging dissent

By Jyoti Malhotra

What better way to challenge the Narendra Modi government's clampdown on foreign funding for several thousand NGOs than to poke fun at it? So when Greenpeace India was recently barred from receiving funds from abroad, ostensibly because it was working against the "national interest", it decided to do exactly that. On September 1 it announced a Bollywood poster design competition wherein

iconic films were given a twist.

So, the *Kabhi Khushi, Kabhie Gham* poster has the Greenpeace staff standing next to each other in exactly the same way as the actors in the Yash Raj film did. The tagline at the bottom of the poster of *A Wednesday* says, "Greenpeace India/MHA Filmworks and IB Productions presents..." taking off on the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which cancelled the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) registration, and the Intelligence Bureau (IB), whose report in June



GETTY IMAGES

STANDING UP TO SCRUTINY

Teesta Setalvad says CBI heat will not deter her in her fight for riots victims

On August 4, the Gujarat High Court began hearing a criminal revision complaint by Zakia Jafri, questioning the "clean chit" given to former Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi and others in the 2002 Ahmedabad riots. The riots at the city's Gulberg Society on February 28 that year had killed her husband, former MP Ehsan Jafri, and 68 others. Thirteen years on, what gives Jafri hope and courage in seeking justice is the support from Teesta Setalvad, the Mumbai-based civil rights activist against whom a

CBI warrant for custodial interrogation was dismissed by the Bombay High Court on August 12.

The CBI story began this July 9, when, based on a complaint from the Foreigners Division (FCRA wing) of the MHA, it filed an FIR against the wife-husband duo of Setalvad and Javed Anand, accusing them of violating the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA). According to the CBI, as directors of Sabrang Communications and Publishing Pvt Ltd (SCPPL), the two had taken foreign contributions worth \$290,000 from Ford Foundation, a non-profit US organisation when they neither had an FCRA account nor had taken requisite permissions from the MHA.

The SCPPL says it received grants worth \$90,000 on April 5, 2004, and \$200,000 on September 22, 2006, to "address communalism and caste-based discrimination in India through active research, web-based information dissemination, development of

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TEESTA SETALVAD



GREENPEACE ACTIVISTS STAGE A PROTEST AGAINST THE COAL SCAM, IN AUGUST 2012 IN NEW DELHI

2014 on thousands of NGOs allegedly misusing foreign funds lit a fuse under the whole issue.

In fact, 13,700 NGOs, both Indian and foreign, have had their FCRA licences revoked since the Modi government came to power. These include Greenpeace India and Ford Foundation, which has been in operation in India since 1952 and has donated about \$500 million since then. Several international NGOs are being subjected to “specific targeted action”, says noted lawyer Prashant Bhushan, “because the government sees them as a threat to its model of corporate development”.

For example, Greenpeace India exposed through RTI that of 233 coal blocks in the no-go list since the last government, only 35 remain. As for the \$12.5 billion Ford Foundation, its placement on a watch list in April came soon after the Central Bureau of Investigation raided the premises of Teesta Setalvad’s Sabrang Communications & Publishing Private Ltd (*see report below*).

civil society networks and media strategies”. Setalvad and Anand also say the agreements and activity reports had been given to the CBI, as also to FCRA authorities and the Gujarat Police. “Why is CBI raiding our premises after all these years? After all, the first tranche of money from Ford came in 2006, and the second in 2006,” Setalvad says.

MHA sources said the CBI search was conducted on a request from the Gujarat home ministry, which had sought an inquiry into Setalvad’s source of funds. It seems the discovery that Ford Foundation was not registered with the government was a by-product of this probe.

Meanwhile, the Gujarat Police has charged Teesta for collecting Rs 1.72 crore to build a memorial in the name of the Gujarat riot victims, which she instead spent on personal items like cosmetics and to eat out. The police say she used a credit card for these personal expenses, which

she reimbursed through funds meant for the Trust.

“I am being victimised because I, with CJP, have helped at least 500 riots survivors record their testimonies as witnesses,” Setalvad says.

THE CBI IS INVESTIGATING SETALVAD’S FIRM RECEIVING FUNDS FROM THE FORD FOUNDATION. SHE CLAIMS SHE IS BEING VICTIMISED.

“The manner in which the CBI carried out its 22-hour search in Setalvad’s home and office was very odd. Considering the warrant didn’t specify what the CBI was looking for, what is the basis for it to say that Teesta isn’t cooperating,” asks Delhi-based senior lawyer Nitya Ramakrishnan. “The CBI didn’t even give her a list of

the documents they took away.”

One critical aspect of the August high court order is that it gives Setalvad the freedom to travel the 527 kilometres between Mumbai and Ahmedabad—or indeed elsewhere in the country—as and when she pleases. Among the journeys will be those to the court of Justice Sonia Gokani, now hearing the Zakia Jafri case in Gujarat High Court. Survivors believe Setalvad’s presence in the Zakia Jafri as well as Naroda Patiya cases is imperative.

Ninety-seven people were killed in the Ahmedabad suburb of Naroda Patiya in the riots and Setalvad’s dogged support helped convict 32 people in 2012. After several convicts challenged the decision, the high court began hearing the Naroda Patiya cases as well from July 28.

Setalvad’s organisation, the Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP), is a co-petitioner in the case.

by Jyoti Malhotra

Depending upon whether the NGO wants to be a trust, society or non-profit company, the process of registration differs. "Charitable societies...(or those) established for the promotion of science, literature, or the fine arts, for instruction, the diffusion of useful knowledge, the diffusion of political education, etc" must be registered under the Societies Act, 1860. If an internationally recognised NGO wants to open a chapter in India, it must subscribe to the FCRA Act to receive foreign funding. At the end of each year, the NGO must show that the funds were utilised for the purpose for which they were transferred into the country, along with relevant bank details, so that it is not in violation of the FCRA.

For Greenpeace India, it seems as if things are going to get only worse. The 'harassment' over the past year has been well recorded—how one of its activists, Priya Pillai, was prevented from travelling to the UK because she was going to speak to a British parliamentary committee, how the transfer of funds from the mother organisation to its Indian chapter was frozen, as well as all its seven accounts later.

But now it seems the Tamil Nadu Registration Department, where Greenpeace India is registered, has been asking some knotty questions for the first time in several years. For example, why has the signed attendance sheet of its Annual General Meeting not been filed with the authorities? How does Greenpeace International control Greenpeace India? Why does the foreign income declared under FCRA not tally with the Indian income shown to the registration department?

The answer to the last, says Vinuta Gopal, Greenpeace India's interim co-executive director, is because the two incomes are from different sources—foreign and Indian, respectively. "It's clear that the MHA is going to continue to try and gag us. This seems quite clearly linked to the shrinking space for dissent in India," says Gopal.

But Gopal insists she has great faith in the Indian courts. When Greenpeace went to court after all its

accounts were frozen, the Delhi High Court not only ruled that the NGO be allowed access to its Indian accounts, but pointed out that dissent is an integral part of democracy. Greenpeace India is now preparing to challenge its FCRA cancellation in court.

Other major NGOs reportedly on the MHA's watch list are climate-related NGOs such as ClimateWorks Foundation, 350.org and the Sierra Club; ActionAid, an anti-poverty NGO which has been working in India since 1972; the Danish International Development Agency (Danida); the

of NGOs as per the FCRA. Those NGOs which are violating the law, action is being taken against them," says MHA spokesperson Kuldeep Dhatwalia.

The government's 'harassment' of the Ford Foundation has now led to its India Director Kavita Ramdas moving to New York. Considering the foundation has been put on a "prior permission" watch list, which means that Indian banks cannot disburse Ford money without MHA permission, \$4 million in donations have been frozen.

In a letter released in New York to the foundation's grantees, Ramdas pointed out that civil society in India had faced a "rapidly changing context and new challenges" in recent months. Ford's application for registration—it hadn't been registered all these years—with the Indian government is now underway.

It's not clear whether the squeeze on the foreign NGOs is a fallout of the tension between PM Modi and Home Minister Rajnath Singh, especially since US Ambassador to India Richard Verma expressed his annoyance over it and the PMO subsequently decided to reappraise the matter.

Meanwhile, Bhushan has decided to take the fight against the MHA's exercise of power to a new level, by pointing out that political parties such as the BJP and the Congress had both taken foreign funding from Vedanta subsidiaries, thereby violating the FCRA. None other than the MHA had admitted last year that both parties had taken funds from Vedanta subsidiaries (the Vedanta balance sheet mentions donations of \$2.1 million), Bhushan said.

The government is fully entitled to demand information of funds received and utilised according to the declaration the NGOs have themselves made. They could, however, have demanded this information in a more orderly manner. By slapping the "national security" clause against some foreign-funded NGOs and refusing to say why it has done so, the government has only added to the confusion that prevails on the subject.

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GREENPEACE ACTIVISTS RAPPEL DOWN THEIR OFFICE BUILDING IN BENGALURU



13,700 NGOS, BOTH INDIAN AND FOREIGN, HAVE HAD THEIR FCRA LICENCES REVOKED SINCE THE MODI GOVERNMENT CAME TO POWER.

Dutch NGO Hivos; and Mercy Corps, a US non-profit. Hivos and 350.org were first named in the IB's June 2014 report, which said at least 2-3 per cent of India's GDP growth was impacted by the activities of these NGOs challenging industrial activity on environmental grounds. Greenpeace India was accused of "taking down Indian development projects" by the IB, as were Hivos and 350.org, preventing activists from these organisations from finding out the real reasons. "The government is streamlining the working



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OROP WAR ENDS, FUND BATTLE BEGINS

Breakthrough achieved but veterans complain that the government is yet to clear stand on key demands

By Sandeep Unnithan

A nudge from the RSS and BJP on September 2 goaded the government to finally push through the One Rank, One Pension (OROP) scheme. Senior RSS leaders Bhaiyyaji Joshi, Krishna Gopal and Dattatreya Hosabale, who were attending the three-day coordination meeting with their affiliate organisations in Delhi, urged Finance Minister Arun Jaitley to clear the OROP proposal. BJP President Amit Shah was also present at the scene. The RSS was worried about the fallout of the ongoing 80-day protest by the veterans at the Jantar Mantar in Delhi while Shah was more focused on the impact it can have on the forthcoming Bihar elections and the fact that the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party could hijack the ex-servicemen's agitation.

Jaitley returned to his office in North Block later that evening, signed off on the OROP file before flying off to Turkey the next day to participate in the conference of G20 finance ministers. On September 5, just three days later, Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar announced the single biggest relief measure by any government for retired military personnel. It resolved an issue that has bedevilled ex-servicemen for decades and allowed the government to cock a snook at the Congress-led UPA which in 2014 cleared OROP but allotted just a meagre Rs 500 crore for it. Over the next few months, the government will pay out an estimated Rs 16,000 crore in pension adjustments and arrears to nearly 2.2 million ex-servicemen and 600,000 widows. It will spend Rs

8,000-Rs 10,000 crore each year to ensure that ex-servicemen retiring at the same rank and length of service are paid the same pension.

The finance ministry's latest estimates show that OROP may cost the exchequer Rs 16,000 crore or 0.1% of GDP for the financial year 2016. Bureaucrats say they are scrambling to raise the finances, dipping into other revenue sources such as the Swachh Bharat cess.

Even a month back, an OROP roll-out seemed impossible despite it being a BJP electoral promise and repeated assurances by PM Narendra Modi. The bureaucracy opposed it citing fiscal, legal and administrative hurdles. The veterans saw a glimmer of hope in Parrikar who took over as defence minister in November last year. In February this year, he personally worked out a Rs 8,293-crore figure which the government would need to pay out for OROP. "Parrikar went into the level of detailing that no defence minister before him has done," says Rajya Sabha MP Rajeev Chandrasekhar, who has raised the OROP issue in the Parliament for nine years. In March, the defence ministry sent the OROP file to the finance ministry for clearance.

This is where Parrikar's persistence hit a stone wall. Jaitley stood by finance ministry bureaucrats who firmly opposed the payout. Even earlier in June 2014, Jaitley—who then also held the defence portfolio—had asked the veterans to "lower their expectations" when he met them in his North Block office. The government would treat 2011 as the base year for pensions, he said, not the 2013-2014 pension scales as demanded by



THE LONG ROAD TO OROP

September 2013

BJP's prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi promises OROP for ex-servicemen at a rally in Rewari, Haryana.

May 2014

NDA comes to power. PM Modi reiterates commitment to OROP.

the veterans. The finance ministry's impasse with the defence ministry, which lasted between March and July this year, spurred shrill street protests by veterans at Jantar Mantar.

There was no greater irony than veterans, some heroes of the 1965 India-Pakistan War, boycotting the government's 50th anniversary celebrations of the conflict.

In early August, the PM's Principal Secretary Nripendra Misra called for the OROP file when the veterans' protests had begun to embarrass the government. Anurag Jain, joint secretary in the PMO, began consulting with the veterans. Chandrasekhar and former army chief General Ved Prakash

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DECISION TO REVISE
THE PENSION SCHEME**



PANKAJ NANGIA

June 2014 Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, also holding defence ministry portfolio, asks veterans to lower expectations on OROP.	November 2014 Manohar Parrikar takes over as defence minister.	February 2015 Parrikar calculates OROP figure. Gets MoD to clear it.	June 2015 Veterans begin protest at Jantar Mantar in Delhi.	August 15, 2015 Veterans begin hunger strikes after PM Modi fails to announce OROP in his Independence Day speech.	August 29, 2015 The PMO readies OROP proposal, closer to Parrikar's calculation.	September 5, 2015 Parrikar announces OROP rollout. Next day, Modi says the OROP mission is accomplished.
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Malik were called in as intermediaries on August 10. The talks failed because both sides were intransigent: the government on 2011 as the base year; the veterans on OROP to be followed exactly as defined by the Bhagat Singh Koshyari committee in the Rajya Sabha in 2011.

Even an intervention by Army chief General Dalbir Singh on August 27 failed to convince the veterans to budge. The PMO's proposal significantly diluted Parrikar's Rs 8,293-crore OROP figure.

Officials familiar with the negotiations say there was a fundamental shift in the government's attitude after Modi's OROP commitment on August

15, even though he didn't talk about it in his Independence Day speech. "The government swiftly moved the base year from when pensions would be considered from 2011 to 2013," says an official. The government had its new calculations ready on August 30, nearly a week before Parrikar's breakthrough announcement.

Veterans now say the government is yet to clarify on two riders introduced in Parrikar's statement—that pensions will be denied to premature retirees and that pensions will be revised only once every five years and not every year. "If you accept OROP, then you have to accept its definition," says Group Captain V.K. Gandhi,

general secretary of the Indian Ex Servicemen's Movement (IESM).

Veterans feel the continued protests will hasten the government's slow-grind process of issuing an order that will actually transfer money into their bank accounts. "We are aware how the bureaucracy thinks—if you cannot deny, then delay," says Major General Surjit Singh (retired), a member of the fourth and fifth Pay Commission cell.

Military watchers point at how the bitter standoff has ruptured the already frayed bonds between the government, bureaucracy and ex-servicemen. An ugly precedence has now been established.

with Santosh Kumar



WHY MAHADALITS HOLD THE TRUMP CARD

With the NDA wooing them assiduously and Jitan Ram Manjhi out of the JD(U), Nitish Kumar faces an uphill task

By Amitabh Srivastava

Bihar ko apni sarkar do; jo hai usko gaddi se utar do.

Having finished his hour-long speech at a rally in Fatehpur High School in Gaya district on a sultry Sunday afternoon, Jitan Ram Manjhi barely gets off the first-floor porch when a group

of more than a hundred women—all National Rural Health Mission contract employees and almost all of them from Dalit families—surround him. Raising slogans against the Nitish Kumar government, they repeat Manjhi's punch line from the rally: Give Bihar its own government; throw out the incumbent.

As the group surrounds him amid beats of *dholak*, Manjhi looks pleased as punch with his seemingly rising

popularity. "Wait for two months," the former Bihar chief minister tells them. "Let the NDA government take shape—we will fulfil all your demands."

Approximately 70 km from Fatehpur is Mahakar, Manjhi's native village in the same district. Ramashesh Manjhi, a daily wage earner, does not betray any anxiety as he plays cards with a group of youths from the Musahar community. Maheshwar Manjhi, 50, a fellow daily wager watching the game, says quietly, "We will teach this government a lesson."

A Mahadalit, or lowest of the low in

RANJAN RAHI

BJP PRESIDENT AMIT SHAH (RIGHT) WITH THE NDA'S DALIT ALLIES IN BIHAR: JITAN RAM MANJHI AND RAM VILAS PASWAN



caste hierarchy, Musahar is the community former CM Manjhi belongs to. Mahakar is at present in the middle of an infrastructure and construction boom, thanks to Manjhi's 278-day tenure. There are only about 25 Musahar families in the hundred-odd households in the village. But like Ramashesh and Maheshwar, the quiet certitude with which the community is voicing its opinion against Manjhi's mentor-turned-foe, Nitish, is reflected in many areas. The communities—the Dalit, or Scheduled Caste (SC), population of the state is divided into 22 sub-castes—are still seething against Nitish for unseating the first Musahar chief minister in the caste-fractured state.

This is where the problem starts for Nitish. As 15.9 per cent of the state's population, they can make or mar a political front in the five-phase elections to be held between October 12 and November 5—in fact, if counted as one, the Dalits are numerically

nearly as strong as the Yadav electorate of Bihar. Although still remembered fondly by the SC population in many parts of the state—primarily for getting 18 sub-castes, and subsequently three others, from the state the Mahadalit tag, and launching welfare schemes for their benefit—Nitish has found a huge roadblock in the shape of 70-year-old Manjhi in his quest for Dalit votes this time. These are the voters who gave Janata Dal (United) a clear edge in the 2009 Lok Sabha and 2010 assembly elections.

Until 2009, seats reserved for the SCs were evenly distributed among various parties. That year, however, JD(U) won four of the six reserved Lok Sabha seats and the following year the JD(U)-led NDA won 37 of 38 reserved assembly seats. Lalu Prasad's RJD, considered the messiah of the underclass in the 1990s, had to be content with only one. Now, in a fiercely contested bipolar election, where the

THE DALIT FACTOR

22 sub-castes listed as Scheduled Castes Account for 15.9% of Bihar population, 18.44% of the state's electorate

3 sub-castes—Ravidas, Musahars and Paswans—account for nearly 70% of SCs

Nitish government categorised 21 of 22 sub-castes as "most deprived", calling them Mahadalits

Manjhi government included the 22nd caste (Paswans) also under Mahadalit category

BIHAR'S TOP SC LEADERS

NDA









RAM VILAS PASWAN Lok Janshakti Party, has sway over 4.5% Paswan votes
JITAN RAM MANJHI (HAM-S), tallest Musahar leader; community has 5.5% votes

JANATA PARIVAR

NITISH KUMAR, not a Dalit but popular with the community for his efforts to uplift Mahadalits

Former assembly speaker **UDAI NARAYAN CHOUDHARY** (JD-U)
Minister **SHYAM RAJAK** (JD-U)
Minister **RAMAI RAM** (JD-U)
Congress state President **ASHOK CHOUDHARY**

FIGHT FOR RESERVED SEATS

		2005 (FEB)	2005 (OCT)	2010
JD(U)		9	15	19
BJP		6	12	18
RJD		12	6	1
NCP		1	-	-
CPI(ML)		2	1	-
Independent		1	-	-
LJP		4	2	-
Congress		3	2	-
CPI		1	1	-

2010: Reserved SC seats- 38
2005: Reserved SC seats- 39

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JD(U)-RJD-Congress alliance is likely to get a significant percentage of the Yadav, Kurmi and Muslim votes, and the BJP-led NDA is banking on a large chunk of the upper caste, traders and some backward caste votes—the Extremely Backward Caste (EBC) votes are likely to be divided—the swing of Dalit votes is expected to hold the key.

In both 2009 and 2010, that swing in favour of the NDA had decimated Lalu and his then alliance partner Ram Vilas Paswan, leader of the Lok Janshakti Party and then seen as Bihar's tallest Dalit leader. Paswan, backed by the Paswan caste, drew a blank in 2009 General Election. His party managed only three in the assembly polls the following year; Lalu saw his party's tally slipping to an all-time low of 22 seats in the Assembly.

This headache and heartache was unthinkable for Nitish Kumar even a year ago. Although the Dalit communities, like most others across the heartland, fell to the Narendra Modi wave in the 2014 General Election, the assembly polls were always going to be a different ball game. Jitan Ram Manjhi's recent emergence as a leader of the Dalits has, however, upset those calculations. It has turned on its head the political equations Nitish had assiduously created as the chief minister, nurturing the non-Paswan communities among the SCs.

Nitish constituted the Mahadalit Commission in 2007 to benefit the marginalised sections even among the Dalit sub-castes. He then announced a series of welfare packages. It was hailed as his first masterstroke. When Nitish decided to resign after the electoral humiliation of 2014 and appointed Manjhi, a Mahadalit, as the chief minister, JD(U) strategists hailed it as a second masterstroke.

But Chief Minister Manjhi took no time in emerging as a Dalit icon. Before him, the last and the second Dalit leader after Bhola Paswan Shastri to become Bihar CM was Ram Sundar Das, whose 303 days tenure ended exactly 35 years before Manjhi—in February 1980. While his 10-month

tenure remained pockmarked by controversial statements and decisions, besides a slide in law and order situation, Manjhi earned goodwill among Dalits with decisions such as giving them land, free education to Dalit girls, and inclusion of Paswans in the Mahadalit category towards the end of his tenure.

Although Manjhi is by no means Bihar's only big Dalit leader—JD(U) has the likes of Speaker Udai Narayan Choudhary and ministers Shyam Rajak and Ramai Ram, Congress's state President Ashok Choudhary is a Dalit, and LJP chief Paswan has been in the electoral game for years—the

NITISH AND LALU: CAN THEY WOO BACK THE DALITS?



JITAN RAM MANJHI'S EMERGENCE AS A LEADER OF DALITS HAS UPSET NITISH KUMAR'S GOODWILL AMONG THE STATE'S SCHEDULED CASTE POPULATION.

man from Mahakar played the game of invoking Dalit identity and pride most effectively. No wonder then that this time his Hindustani Awam Morcha-Secular (HAM-S) and Paswan's LJP are trump cards for the NDA in about 20 of 38 reserved constituencies that the BJP is likely to leave for the alliance partners. However, the challenge for the NDA is to smoothen the ties between Paswan and Manjhi even as it eyes contesting not less than 150 of the 243 assembly seats.

Although no specific measures have been announced, the NDA's campaign focus is on both social empowerment and the government's entitlements to Dalit communities. Says a confident Devesh Kumar, the BJP spokesman,

when asked which way the Dalit votes would go: "Nitish Kumar has only used the Dalits for electoral gains—he only divided, misused and humiliated them. The Dalits understand this very well."

The JD(U) on its part is banking on Nitish's efforts to woo them back with what party leaders claim had been substantial work to improve their socioeconomic condition. The Dalits, says Rajak, the food and civil supplies minister, are aware that Nitish had empowered them and showered them with benefits. "They will never leave Nitish Kumar," he says.

Less than seven kilometres to the southwest from Patna's Old Secretariat building, where Rajak sits, lies Phulwari Sharif, the constituency he represents. Not unlike Fatehpur and Mahakar, the anti-Nitish sentiment among the Mahadalits here is equally palpable. "What can you say about someone who serves you food and then snatches the plate away as soon as you begin eating? That's what Nitish Kumar has done," says Lala Manjhi, 45, a daily wage earner from Dhibra-Shahpur locality of the constituency. "Nitish Kumar could not reconcile to the fact that Musahars—the rat eaters and pig breeders—can become more popular than him."

Manjhi has never visited Dhibra; Nitish has. He was here on August 15 to unfurl the tricolour at a Dalit locality and delivered a speech. But the Mahadalit residents of Dhibra do not seem to recall any instance of Nitish going out of the way to help their lot. The image of Nitish implanted on their mind is one of a leader who booted out Manjhi. So how safe is the JD(U) in Phulwari Sharif? "Mantriji will still win easily," replies Ajay Sinha, 57, Rajak's main man in Phulwari. "We expect the Yadavs, Kurmis and Muslims to vote for us. I am not sure about the Mahadalit votes."

For now, no one seems to be any more certain. And on that hinges the fate of the two big alliances—the complexity of the fractious electoral politics of Bihar where the game can be won or lost on which community and sub-caste goes which way on D-Day.

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POLITICS OF FOOD

Agriculture powerhouse Madhya Pradesh still suffers from high levels of malnutrition, a contrast that exposes our flawed food policies

By Gayatri Jayaraman in Alirajpur & Dindori, Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh in mid-March is heavy with the scent of the Mahua blossom. Heaped at village bazaars, and now restricted largely to brewing liquor, its pungent smell is fast disappearing from indigenous tribal stews and curries. On the road to Petlawad and Alirajpur on the western edge of the state, farmers carry double-barrelled rifles as they ride between endless golden fields. Wheat is an aspiration that is gradually replacing corn, a local staple for rotis here, and there are cotton, tomatoes and plump green chickpeas growing sporadically. Soybean, maize, potato, onion, cabbage and cauliflower have begun to dominate the state's 308 lakh hectares of sown land. With 875.6 mm of average rainfall in the South-West monsoons, the state seems lush and blessed, growing at a healthy 8-9 per cent. Since Madhya Pradesh was picked for the Green Revolution in the 1960s, wheat production has increased by 83 per cent, contributing a quarter of India's surplus production in the last decade. It also produces 22 per cent of the nation's pulses, 54 per cent of the country's soybeans, and 38 per cent of the nation's grams.

In short, Madhya Pradesh has no business having one of the highest rates of malnutrition and anaemia in the country. Yet, the Rapid Survey on Children (RSoc) 2013-14, released by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in mid-August, told a different story, making it clear that food production has little correlation to nutrition. One in three children in the state is underweight and over 40 per cent are stunted, far higher than the national average of 29.4 per cent underweight children. Tribal children in the state are worst hit at 46 per cent underweight and 49.7 per cent stunted. Adam Roberts, who first leaked the details of this report in *The Economist* in July, wrote that only Africa throws up the kind of numbers seen in India.

The state is a stark example of how the combination of a push towards market-driven monocropping and arbitrary interventions by the administration tear apart the food-health dynamic, caught as it is in the middle of a soft Hindutva push towards vegetarianism and a public distribution system (PDS) that fails to deliver the right ingredients to its people. The first state to



A WOMAN FROM THE BAIGA TRIBE WITH HER SON AT THEIR HOUSE IN DINDORI



Despite its high yield, Madhya Pradesh has one of the highest rates of malnutrition in the country.

Tribal children in the state are worst hit at 46 per cent under-weight and 49.7 per cent stunted.

Experts blame policies that exclude dietary variety—from meats to eggs, millets to greens.

Aspirational eating has impacted what people eat, and virtually led to the erosion of indigenous foods.

The government and local groups are trying to reintroduce traditional ways of farming, but with little success.

ban beef consumption in 1959, Madhya Pradesh has doggedly refused to adopt eggs in the mid-day meals for anganwadis—as opposed to Maharashtra, another BJP-ruled state that serves ‘vegetarian’ unfertilised eggs. Add to this a falling dairy consumption despite cow protection, and a soybean crop grown more for export than local consumption. As Dipa Sinha, a Right to Food campaigner, says about the thrust to convert tribal people in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh to vegetarianism: “It is nutrition sacrificed at the altar of religion.”

The problem is a simple one, really. A farmer who once grew a rain-hardy millet among rows of pulses, onions, tubers and greens, today grows one market-driven crop, like the others around him do. They all end up competing with each other on price. When unseasonal rains come, as they did this year destroying 20 per cent rabi crops in the state, the pressure increases. In contrast, he would have at least had enough nutritious food to eat if he grew multiple crops. Pioneering scientist R.H. Richharia had identified over 19,000 varieties of rice at the now defunct Madhya Pradesh Rice Research Institute, and R.S. Rana, former director of the National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, identified 166 crops and 320 wild varieties growing in the state at one time. Ashish Kothari, founder of environmental action group Kalpavriksh, says farming today pushes just three or four varieties. “There is no overall figure for loss of crop diversity in India but high-yield varieties now replace crop on almost 75 per cent of rice land and 90 per cent of wheat land in the country,” he says.

With the burden of vegetarianism moving the tribal people off native meats such as the foraged wild boar or smaller forest animals, now banned by the Forest Act—let alone the growing clampdown on cheap beef—the diversity of food options become even more regimented.

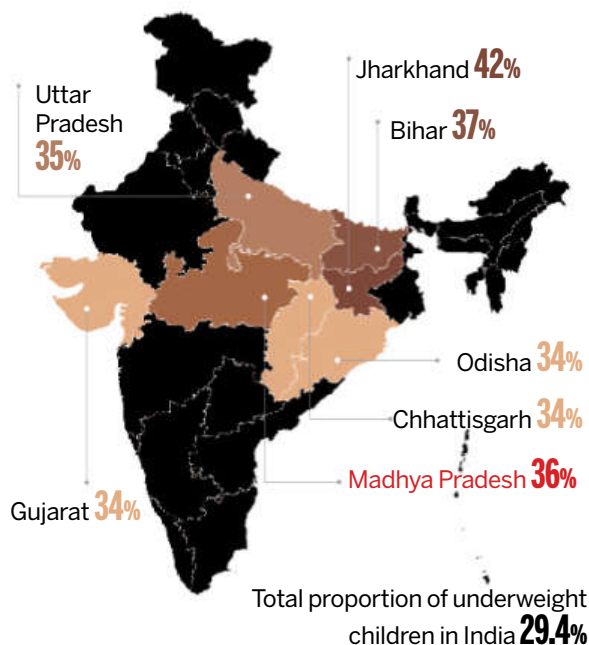
DISAPPEARING VEGETABLES

In Bhopal, Vikas Samvad’s Sachin Jain is an activist who pushed for the introduction of eggs in the mid-day meal programme. His insistence caused Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan to famously say, “*Ande ka funda nahin chalega* (literally ‘the egg theory will not work’, but also an allusion to a Bollywood song from the late ’90s).” Jain says that the only way to combat malnutrition, anaemia and stunting is to include micrograins, micronutrients, green vegetables, iron- and calcium-rich foods, and animal proteins ranging from eggs to fish to meat into the daily diet. But these are exactly the food items the lush new Madhya Pradesh has spent the last decade replacing. “If a state concertedly moves away from the solution, can the problem ever be solved?” he asks.

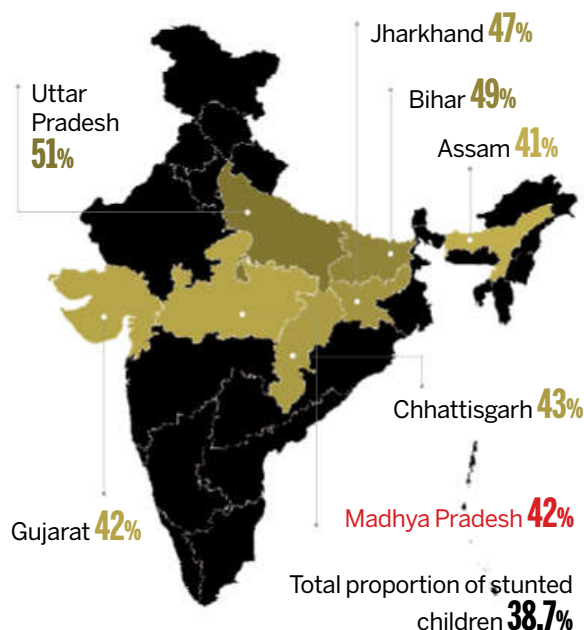
The ruling BJP’s spokesperson for Madhya Pradesh, Hitesh Bajpai, says that the state government has indeed realised that crucial micronutrients are being lost due to the erosion of indigenous eating patterns and crop varieties. One way they have been trying to counter it is to offer a Minimum Support Price to farmers in the tribal belt to start growing millets such as kodo and kutki. Even so, the output has been low as farmers prefer crops with greater demand. The second is to boost consumption through anganwadis, and village-to-village awareness programmes.

INDIA'S WORST PERFORMING STATES

Malnutrition among children



Stunting among children



Source: Table of malnutrition figures for India (RSOC, 2015)

“The egg is a western answer to the loss of micronutrients, but it is not the only answer.”

HITESH BAJPAI BJP spokesperson, Madhya Pradesh

But modern consumption is an irreversible process, research finds, and it's a tough task to restore micronutrients this way. “The egg is a western answer to the loss of micronutrients, but it is not the only answer,” Bajpai insists. “As for the push to vegetarianism, the government is only providing a supplemental nutrition and does not replace a family's primary nutrition. A lot of the Hindu population in MP is non-vegetarian, and remains so. Long-term reversals can be brought about by replacing eating and farming techniques. It's a slow process but we are working on it.”

But what is being lost in the process is invaluable. At Petlawad, Nilesh Desai runs a small school for 200 tribal children. His organisation, Samparkgram, is desperately trying to push indigenous cropping techniques. Small plastic bottles in his storehouse stock disappearing cereals such as kudra, kangni, ragi. In his backyard, organically planted corn grows among rows of *toor* dal, onion and garlic. The pests that feed on corn are fed on by the pests of *toor*, and so the cycle is self-perpetuating and does not need pesticides at all. The school's meals run on these supplies.

Desai's work includes the documenting and categorising of disappearing vegetables. This region once had innumerable local varieties—fang, lamda, chandloi, khathi bhaji, cheel, chhota karela, kachnar, tindori, kachri, chana pala, to name just a few. Greens such as kachnar were once crucial in the fight against anaemia, and tindori has large amounts of vitamin B. These crops have all but disappeared from local knowledge and cultivation, indicative of the mono-crop culture that now rules the region. Discarded as weeds, or replaced by more ‘fashionable’ crops—local bazaars now contain heaps of tomato, potato, aubergines and cauliflower. Corn rotis are being replaced by the wheat rotis—a symbol of the poor man's meal being replaced by the double-door-refrigerator and LED TV-purchasing upwardly mobile tribal.

WRONG KINDS OF FOOD

While the number of cattle has increased in the area due to protection, the dependence on the cattle for milk has gone down locally. There are over six million cattle in the Madhya Pradesh. But locals in Jhabua district have taken to milk powder sold by Nova, sold loose, at Rs 20 a packet. “Malnutrition here is not due to poverty. Malnutrition is due to unsustainable food practices,” Desai says.

M.S. Swaminathan, one of the architects of the Green Revolution, points to the diversity he tried to restore to India's PDS through the reintroduction of millets and multi-crop farming as head of the National Commission on Farmers between 2004 and 2006. “India is at a crossroads and the problem is not the availability of food in general, but the access to the right kinds of foods,” he says. Peter Hazell of

“India is at a crossroads. The problem is not the availability of food, but access to the right kinds of food.”

M.S. SWAMINATHAN Green Revolution architect

International Food Policy Research Institute also points to falling rural and urban cereal consumption with increases in consumption of milk, meat, vegetables and fruit.

While the Indian Council of Medical Research weighs ideal lab measures for optimal nutrition, former National Institute of Nutrition chief Veena Shatrugna explains that these become impossible to translate to the ground for those who typically consume a single roti, an onion and a chilli, and a thin, watery dal. “Lab values work for a wealthy vegetarian who consumes his quota of animal protein from curds, paneer and milk, as well as thick dal,” she says.

ASPIRATIONAL EATING

When the Green Revolution policies were framed, analysts say, they leaned upon the knowledge of the elite policymakers, who pushed the nation towards meals the upper classes ate. This not just left traditional agrarian methods behind but also made growing certain crops aspirational. Prabhu Pingali and Yasmeen Khwaja, who have documented the impact of globalisation on food patterns post-1980s, say “aspirational eating” has pushed diets to less nutritional

but more globally diverse foods. Swaminathan pushed for an amendment to the food security bill to include millets in the PDS in 2012, but the move never took off. Due to increasing health awareness, millets have anyway become popular among the gym-going upper classes but as Dalit activist Chandrabhan Prasad explains, they were once used equally as horse fodder and as pay for Dalit farm hands and “no Dalit would return to eating millets”. Food politics thus leaves the wealthy healthy, and the poor more determined to move away from nourishment than before.

The politics of food functions at various levels, say those working in the area. In the village of Ajkand, some 60 km from Dindori in Madhya Pradesh, live the Baiga tribespeople. They instinctively lean to the forest, now severely curtailed by the Forest Act, for their resources. From varieties of onions and tubers to leaves, greens and meats, the villagers know what to eat when. Kheda, or the hunt for sport, is a communal activity that is sparked by the season when the wild boar ravage their fields. It is beneath their dignity for Baigas to purchase what tradition tells them they should hunt and grow.

The Baigas do not drink milk as they believe human beings should not feed off food of another mammal's child. They want to retain their way of life—their food, their hunting grounds, their beliefs. Their point: one who does not eat wheat rotis and rice with vegetables isn't eating uncivilised meals. And anyone who is, isn't healthy. As Bhopal-based food and environmental activist Rakesh Dewan puts it: “When we celebrate our food diversity, stability will come.”

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MODI'S SMART CITIES HAVE A VIABILITY GAP

The Prime Minister's grand plan for 100 smart cities could be derailed by its proposed funding formula. Can cash-strapped states and municipal bodies raise 60 per cent of the project cost the Union government wants them to?

By Kaushik Deka

There may not be a universally accepted definition of a smart city but here's Narendra Modi's: a city which is two steps ahead of the citizens' requirements. Given how our existing cities come up short on fulfilling even basic needs, the Prime Minister's critics have been quick to dub his dream of 100 smart cities as just another catchy slogan and one of a piece with other government programmes such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao campaign. Modi is only too acutely aware of these apprehensions; while launching the Smart Cities Mission on June 25 in the Capital, he categorically denounced criticism that the project was mere talk.

A careful examination of its proposed funding mechanism, however, suggests that the project could be just

that, at least for now. The Smart Cities Mission will be operated as a centrally sponsored scheme; the Centre proposes Rs 48,000 crore for 100 cities over the next five years—or around Rs 100 crore per city per year. With states also required to contribute an equal amount, nearly Rs 1 lakh crore will be available for smart cities. Union Urban Development Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu, however, says these funds will meet only a part of the project cost: the mission's future depends on how actively the states and civic bodies own up responsibility as they have to generate at least two times the funds allotted by the Centre.

FUND OR TRUST DEFICIT?

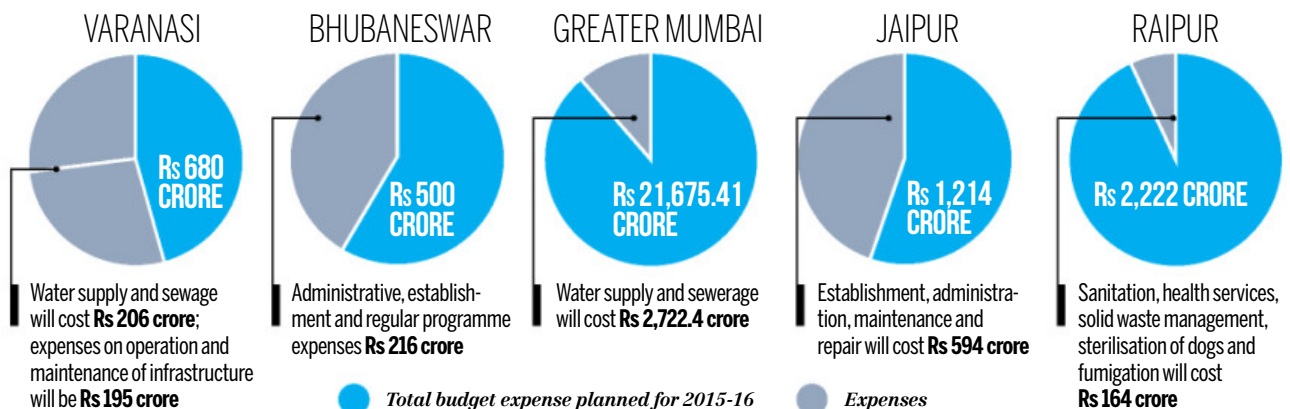
The biggest challenge comes not from the states but the revenue generating abilities of civic bodies. The mission envisages an overall funding formula of 40:40:20 between the Centre, states

and local municipal bodies. However, several civic bodies plead empty coffers that would leave a huge last mile funding deficit for smart cities. "The scenario is worse than the JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission) which had asked local bodies to fund just 10 per cent of a particular project. When we could not fulfil the 10 per cent requirement, how can the Union government expect us to bear 20 per cent cost (for the Smart Cities Mission)?" says Tikender Panwar, deputy mayor, Shimla Municipal Corporation. The capital of Himachal Pradesh, however, could not make it to the list of nominated cities.

According to the 13th Finance Commission, municipal revenue constituted 0.94 per cent of the GDP in 2007-08. This is well below that of other emerging economies such as Brazil and South Africa, where the corresponding figures are 5 per cent

IS RS 192 CRORE A YEAR ENOUGH FOR A SMART CITY?

EVEN IF THE CENTRE, STATES AND URBAN LOCAL BODIES GENERATE THIS TARGETED AMOUNT, IT'S PEANUTS COMPARED TO THE CURRENT BUDGETS OF THE CITIES



WHAT IS A SMART CITY?

GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES STIPULATE THAT A SMART CITY WILL HAVE THESE FEATURES

Efficient land use: the states will introduce flexibility in land use and building bylaws to adapt to change.

Adequate water supply, smart meters, leakage identification, water quality monitoring.

Affordable housing, especially for the poor.

Efficient urban mobility and public transport, smart parking, integrated multi-modal transport, developing a road network that also caters to pedestrians and cyclists.

Safety and security of citizens, particularly women, children and the elderly, and video crime monitoring.

Sanitation, solid waste management, treatment of waste water, waste as a source of energy and fuel, recycling of waste.

Quality health and education, telemedicine, skill development centres, incubation and trade facilitation centres.

Assured power supply, smart meters, renewable source of energy, green buildings.

Good governance, especially e-governance, IT connectivity and digitalisation, cell phones to reduce cost of services.

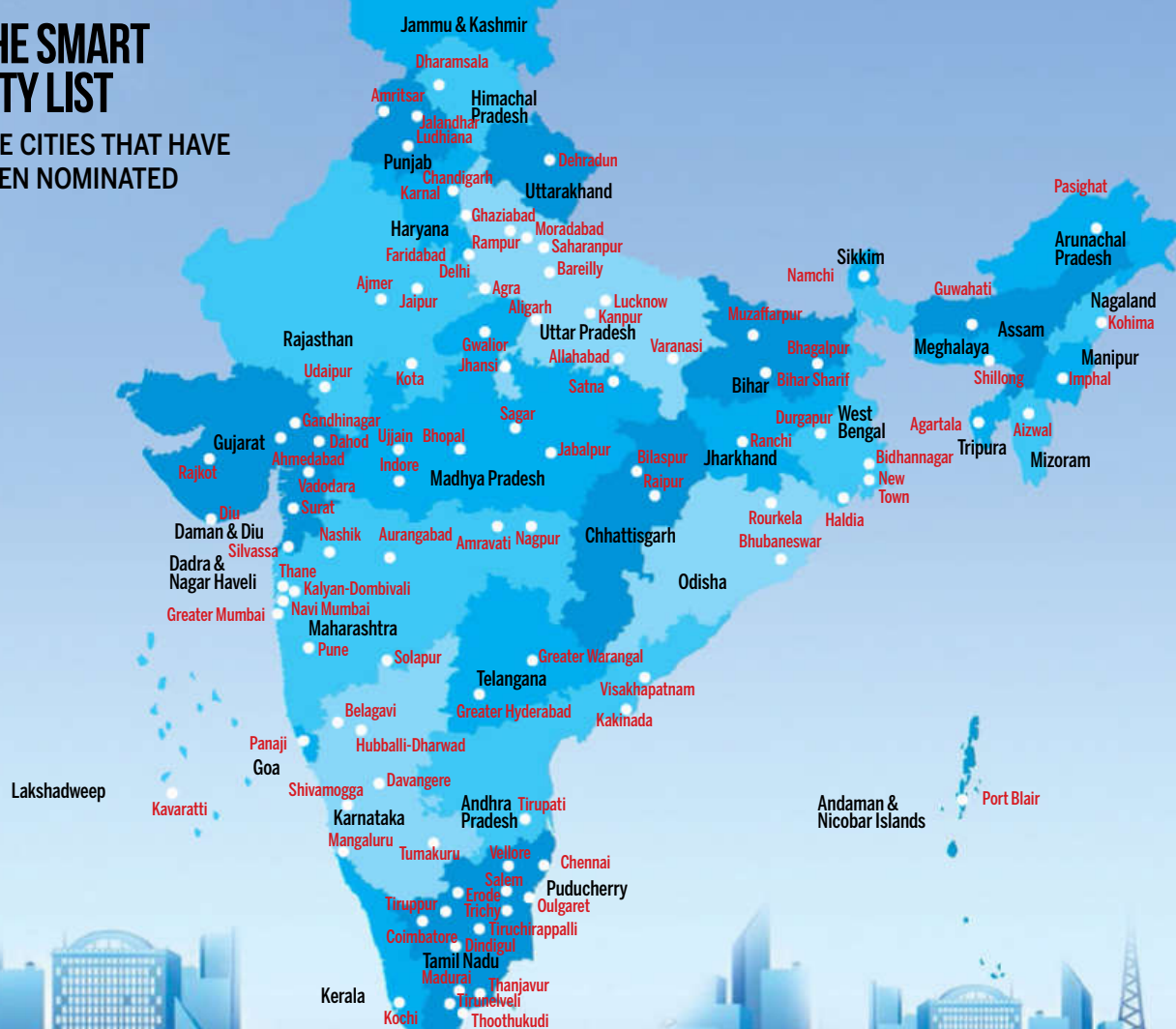


Illustration by SACHIN RUHIL

Sustainable environment, low air pollution, more parks and recreational spaces.

THE SMART CITY LIST

THE CITIES THAT HAVE BEEN NOMINATED



Graphic by SACHIN RUHIL

and 6 per cent respectively. Consider this: financing infrastructure and public service delivery in Indian cities and towns is estimated to cost upwards of Rs 40 lakh crore during the two decades (from 2011 to 2031), says a report of the high-powered expert committee constituted by the Ministry of Urban Development. This amount excludes the cost of land acquisition for development, inflation at any time and cost overruns of projects. In contrast, total revenue of urban local bodies may not exceed Rs 100,000-

Rs 150,000 crore per annum. Of this, only a modest percentage would be available for financing infrastructure, after accounting for establishment and administrative expenses.

However, the deficit can be bridged, as a February 2013 report by the Asian Development Bank indicates: municipalities have the potential of raising revenues by 110 per cent without any fundamental change in property valuation or the tax rate structure. The challenge before the government is to make that happen.

The civic bodies' mistrust of central funding also stems from the conflicting signals in the Union budget. In the 2014-15 budget, Rs 7,016 crore was set aside for smart cities. This year's budget, in contrast, has allotted Rs 143.05 crore for the same. However, the urban development ministry—entrusted with the task of implementing the project—has seen a 53 per cent rise in its budget allocation for 2015-16 at Rs 16,832 crore, up from Rs 11,013 crore the previous year. Partha Mukhopadhyay, senior fellow at the Centre for Policy

HOW SMART CITIES WILL BE SELECTED

Cities with exceptional proposals will be selected from among the 100 cities proposed by the states

JUNE-JULY 2015

States shortlisted potential smart cities. The number of smart cities in a state was decided by the urban population of the state and the number of statutory towns in it.

AUGUST 2015

100 cities were announced.

AUGUST-OCTOBER 2015

Each city will formulate its own unique plan for a smart city, assisted by a consultant and a hand-holding agency such as the World Bank. The Centre will give Rs 2 crore for this. The cities will then submit proposals to a panel of experts.

DECEMBER 2015

Cities with exceptional proposals will be selected. A few cities will get another chance to improve their proposal. Remaining can compete next year. Selected cities will set up an SPV with a corpus of Rs 200 crore.

DECEMBER 2015-FEBRUARY 2016

Teams from the shortlisted cities will take part in an innovation and implementation planning programme to refine their proposals.

42 per cent which will give states an additional Rs 1.78 lakh crore in 2015-16. The government has also accepted the commission's recommendation for grants to the tune of Rs 2 lakh crore to panchayats and Rs 87,143 crore to municipalities for five years. However, most non-NDA-ruled states claim that states have gained little in the new revenue-sharing structure as the Centre has reduced funds for 24 centrally sponsored schemes.

Naidu also talks of borrowing from external agencies to cover any funding deficit. The Union government has suggested that civic bodies float bonds to raise money, but this runs into a credibility wall: most local bodies in India, because they lack credit ratings, may not be able to borrow from agencies nor float bonds that will have takers.

During his June 25 speech, the

15 countries including the US, Britain, Germany, France, Japan, China, Singapore, Israel and Australia. But if US Ambassador to India Richard Verma's comments in April are anything to go by, pinning all hope on FDI may not be the best proposition: "Indian state and central governments as well as industry will need to take the lead in providing finances for smart cities. Land acquisition, FDI and other questions still remain unresolved. The expectation of large amounts of private sector finance, either domestic or foreign, will be a challenge."

Modi's vision for PPP finds a mention in the mission statement for smart cities released by the urban development ministry. The guidelines say that each municipal corporation has to float a special purpose vehicle (SPV) for creation of smart cities. The SPV will be established as a limited company under the Companies Act, 2013, and will be promoted by the states and civic bodies jointly, both having 50:50 equity shareholding. The private sector or financial institutions could be considered for taking equity stake in the SPV, provided the state and the ULB (urban local body) shares are equal to each other, and the state and ULB together have majority shareholding and control of the SPV. Naidu quotes a Nasscom report which estimates an investment opportunity of about \$30 billion for IT companies in meeting the demand for technology-based smart solutions for smart cities.



Several countries have expressed strong interest in collaborating on the smart cities project."

M. VENKAIHA NAIDU

Union Minister of
Urban Development

Research in Delhi, believes the reduced budget for smart cities is a sensible decision. "There may not be enough time to spend the money. So, Rs 143 crore may be realistic," he says.

As one of the sources of funding for the states, Naidu points towards the "additional resources transferred to them after the acceptance of the 14th Finance Commission's recommendations", referring to the NDA government at the Centre agreeing to raise the share of states in the divisible pool of central taxes from 32 per cent to

Prime Minister mentioned two more probable sources of funding—foreign direct investment (FDI) and the public-private partnership (PPP) model. During his Japan visit in August 2014, he also got a memorandum of understanding signed between Indian Ambassador Deepa Wadhwa and Kyoto Mayor Daisaku Kadokawa for developing Varanasi into a smart city. The NDA has allowed 100 per cent FDI in the housing and real estate sector.

According to Naidu, the smart city initiative has received interest from

I SUSTAINING THE MISSION

The issue on which rides the future of the Smart Cities Mission—something the Centre is aware of even if Modi dismisses the charge that the project is a fanciful idea—is how strongly the civic bodies work to sustain the mission. The mission statement, therefore, clearly states that the "success of this endeavour will depend upon the robustness of SPV's revenue model". It is this uncertainty, perhaps, that prompted the PM to up the ante and say that he would take the blame if the project were to fail. Will the states and civic bodies rise up to the challenge?

with Rakesh Dixit and Manjeet Sehgal

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RESETTING THE RELATI



As Sri Lanka's newly elected PM comes visiting, India hopes to put the glacial ties during the Rajapaksa regime firmly in the past

By Namini Wijedasa

Sri Lanka is at a turning point. A parliamentary election in August returned a new government led by a veteran politician, Ranil Wickremesinghe. His administration faces daunting challenges—and tackling the bitter legacies of protracted ethnic strife is only one of them.

Wickremesinghe was sworn in as prime minister on August 21, four days after a peaceful election that

saw high voter participation. In reality, he had held the post since January when Mahinda Rajapaksa, the country's war-winning ruler, was defeated in a snap presidential poll. But that had been an interim arrangement arising from a political pact with Maithripala Sirisena, the new president. Since his United National Party squeaked through to power, however, Wickremesinghe is tasked with running an elected government for the next five years. And he must do it with Sirisena, who heads Sri Lanka Freedom Party, a traditional opponent.

The success of the new government will depend heavily on how well its president and prime minister tolerate each other. The two leaders have set up a “national government”, the contours of which have not been adequately clarified. If anything, it has

resulted in a devilishly complicated configuration in parliament with no clear boundaries between opposition and government.

Ironically, this allowed for the appointment of the country's first Tamil opposition leader in nearly four decades. Rajavarotheiam Sampanthan, 82, heads the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and is an institution in Sri Lankan politics. The TNA has 16 seats in the 225-seat parliament. Civil society welcomed the move. “With the leadership of the opposition in parliament being formally granted to it, the TNA is provided with an opportunity, and a duty, to conduct parliamentary affairs in the national interest,” observed the National Peace Council in a statement.

The choice of Sampanthan could give impetus to government plans to

ONSHIP

**RANIL WICKREMESINGHE,
SRI LANKA'S NEW PRIME MINISTER**

Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva the results of an international probe into the allegations. After the change in government, however, key international players have stepped up cooperation. This includes the US, which sponsored a string of resolutions critical of Sri Lanka since 2012. The two countries have now agreed to adopt a "collaborative approach" on a fresh resolution at the HRC later this month.

Wickremesinghe is expected to solicit New Delhi's support going forward. Relations between India and Sri Lanka were glacial during the final years of the Rajapaksa regime. They have thawed now but sensitive issues remain unaddressed. One is poaching by south Indian bottom-trawlers in Sri Lankan seas. Wickremesinghe will flag it at bilateral meetings.

One of New Delhi's biggest concerns is the future of Colombo's relationship with Beijing. Rajapaksa had played a zero-sum game, cultivating ties with China at the expense of friendships with other countries—particularly in the West. The arrangement was mutually beneficial. Chinese companies and contractors secured the largest, most lucrative projects in Sri Lanka which, in turn, had an ally that did not

"meddle" in internal affairs.

The Rajapaksa administration caused significant anxiety, however, when it allowed a Chinese submarine to twice dock at the Colombo port in 2014. India was worried, too, over the Colombo Port City project, a massive Chinese investment that envisaged reclaiming vast amount of lands from the sea. But Sri Lanka is keen to maintain ties with China, a traditional ally, while balancing regional complexities. Thus, the Port City project is being reexamined. The new administration might seek to renegotiate the contract and insist on the reclaimed area being a demilitarised zone.

For any of this to succeed, President Sirisena and Prime Minister Wickremesinghe will need some degree of stability. They have pledged changes to the electoral system, a right to information law and legislation to strengthen financial accountability. Constitutional amendments are planned; these require a two-thirds majority.

Yet, Sri Lankan politicians are notoriously fickle. They defect at the drop of a hat. To keep them in check, the two leaders consented to a massive cabinet of more than 40 ministers. Another 45 parliamentarians are state and deputy ministers. The total is nearly a 100—a heavy price to pay for stability.

The government must now set about attracting investment. There is a long list of corruption investigations to complete, mostly focusing on activities of the previous regime but also on a "bond scam" implicating the incumbent governor of the Central Bank. Public institutions were heavily politicised and need revamping. People want more jobs and money.

It is crucial to start negotiations towards reaching a permanent solution to the ethnic conflict. Rajapaksa and his allies had campaigned at both elections on a platform of fear-mongering, racism and national pride. Some parties in the Tamil majority north had done the same. They all lost to more moderate forces, a clear signal to the leadership. Another squandered opportunity would be one too late. ■

AFF

forge ahead with reconciliation and power-sharing with minorities. These topics will figure prominently in bilateral talks between Wickremesinghe and his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, when he visits New Delhi from September 14-16. India has consistently urged the Sri Lankan government to strike an acceptable deal with the Tamils. The two sides are also likely to discuss Colombo's plans for a domestic mechanism to inquire into allegations of war crimes levelled against the military and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Much work has been done but the outlines of the proposed investigative body remain closely guarded. Not for long.

Sri Lanka faces a crucial test in September when the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OCHCR) releases to the UN

**SRI LANKAN PRESIDENT
MAITHRIPALA SIRISENA**



**THE SUCCESS
OF THE NEW
GOVERNMENT
WILL DEPEND
HEAVILY ON
HOW WELL ITS
PRESIDENT AND
PRIME MINISTER
WORK WITH
EACH OTHER.**

By Suhani Singh

Until last year, Radhika Apte could step out of her apartment in Yari Road in Mumbai, and unlike one of its most popular residents, Priyanka Chopra, wouldn't have to worry about being recognised on the streets. Then 2015 happened. With four movie releases—*Badlapur*, *Hunterrr*, *Manjhi: The Mountain Man* and *Kaun Kitney Paani Mein*—along with Anurag Basu's TV series *Chokher Bali* and Sujoy Ghosh-directed short *Ahalya*, Apte, five years since she had her first noteworthy role in Ram Gopal Varma's *Rakhta Charitra*, is now a familiar face. "The buzz is there but the real test is to see how long it lasts," she says with cautious optimism.

Apte, 30, is a much-welcomed rarity in Bollywood, an assured young woman who isn't eager to conform to the film industry's tropes. That she can find room in a competitive field is a sign of how filmmakers and audiences are becoming receptive to actresses who aren't afraid to experiment and play complex parts.

The year 2015 has already seen the successful journey of what one may call the 'other heroine'. She isn't merely a prop to the hero but a woman with a mind of her own. It started with Apte's pitch-perfect act as a wife trapped in her husband's misdemeanours and Huma Qureshi as a sex worker and confidante of a villain in *Badlapur*. Bhumi Pednekar's overweight but confident small-town bride in *Dum Laga Ke Haisha* brought cheers. There was also Shweta Tripathi, 31, who, as the charming, poetry-loving college girl, made the most of her feature debut in Neeraj Ghaywan's Varanasi-set drama *Masaan*. Richa Chadha, 26, also wowed in the same film as a young woman consumed with grief and guilt.

What's My Part?

Much like their predecessors Smita Patil, Shabana Azmi and Deepti Naval of the 1980s, this new crop of actresses doesn't want to be seen in cookie-cutter sequels or become dolled-up characters with wafer-thin personalities. Instead of appearance, they want

Who's That GIRL?

A new crop of spunky actresses who wouldn't confine themselves to run-of-the-mill cinema and yet avoid getting the 'indie specialist' tag takes Bollywood by storm

RAJWANT RAWAT



RICHA CHADHA 26

Breakthrough As the headstrong single mother in *Gangs of Wasseypur I & II*

What's next? Sudhir Mishra's *Aur Devdas*, Pooja Bhatt's *Cabaret*



their performance to take precedence. More than the duration of the role, it's the possibilities of the character that excite them. It explains why Chadha didn't mind sharing the spotlight with Deepika Padukone and Supriya Pathak in *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela* and knew that *Fukrey's* Bholi Punjaban was a colourful character who, despite the late entry, would be the main attraction of the film. As Tripathi says, "My screen time never bothered me. You want to be remembered for your characters because that means you have done justice to them."

The new-age actresses are spunky

too. With *Masaan* getting a standing ovation at Cannes, where it also won two awards, Chadha posted a picture on Twitter showing a middle finger to her detractors. "It was my response to people who tell you not to stand by a certain kind of cinema because it is too niche, low-budget or doesn't have songs-dances," says Chadha.

Age of Storytelling

The lines between commercial and independent films are more porous than ever before. Even for the A-league actresses such as Deepika Padukone, Kangna Ranaut, Priyanka Chopra and

Anushka Sharma, simply being arm candy to a superstar is no longer the ultimate goal. So audiences get to see Sharma as an angry young wife seeking vengeance in *NH10*, Padukone as an independent young woman struggling to cope with her childlike father in *Piku* and Ranaut in a boyish hairdo and with a Haryanvi accent in *Tanu Weds Manu Returns*. Box office success of these films has resulted in a productive spell that has widened the perception and ambit of what a heroine does and how she looks. It enables actresses such as Nimrat Kaur (*The Lunchbox*) and Huma Qureshi (*Dedh Ishqiya*) to co-exist as steadfast filmmakers are willing to bank on them despite their lack of star power.

While most have made their name in small, independent films, the new-age heroines also recognise the need to branch out and thereby avoid being pigeonholed as practitioners of a particular type of cinema. "We really suffer in this industry because we have too many tags for too many things," says Chadha. "We are commercial, arty, deglamorised, sexy... Even before you meet someone, already there are so many filters." Adds Apte: "I have never had an image, I do not crave for one and I hope that I do not get one."

The Waiting Game

While Apte is from Pune, Tripathi, like Chadha, was brought up in Delhi. The lack of filmi connections and with Mumbai being their second home, these actresses have to be their own godfathers. Thus patience and resilience become important—whether it is for signing the dream project or awaiting a film's release.

Tripathi is familiar with the game. After starring in Disney show *Kya Mast Hai Life*, assisting British filmmaker Michael Winterbottom on *Trishna* and doing plays, the NIFT graduate signed her first film, *Haramkhor*, opposite Nawazuddin Siddiqui in 2013. Directed by newcomer Shlok Sharma, it has been screened at international film festivals and now seeks a release in India. Tripathi chooses not to stay in Andheri, home to half of the film industry, so that she doesn't have to face the common question: "So what's happening?"

MANDAR DEODHAR



SHWETA TRIPATHI 31

Breakthrough As Shaalu, the sweet girl next door, in *Masaan*

What's next? Shlok Sharma's *Haramkhor* with Nawazuddin Siddiqui

She says, "It is anyway difficult to get the kind of work that you want to get," adding, "Even with ads, you want to be choosy. It means you never have it easy."

Fitting into the industry means adhering to certain unchangeable

rules of the game. Walking on the runway for fashion designers and attending parties is as important as heading to international film festivals. "I used to hardly wear *kajal*, let alone proper make-up. Now I have learned how to do make-up in the car. I was of

the belief that my talent will speak for itself but this industry is also about appearance," Tripathi says.

Balancing Act

What's certain though is that these actresses won't do run-of-the-mill cinema and make a conscious effort to do meaningful roles. If Tripathi charmed in *Masaan*, in *Haramkhor* she is likely to shock as she plays a 15-year-old girl who has an affair with her much older and married teacher (Siddiqui).

After the release of *The Lunchbox*, Kaur waited for over a year to find a part that challenged her. It came in *Airlift* (to be released in 2016), where she is paired opposite Akshay Kumar. Meanwhile, Chadha will put on her dancing shoes for Pooja Bhatt's *Cabaret*. "I like the fact that she envies me in a part like that," she says.

The willingness of filmmakers to feature actresses such as Kaur and Chadha in more mainstream projects is proof of the changing ways of Hindi cinema. But the burgeoning world of independent cinema will always be where they feel most at ease. Chadha has wrapped up Sudhir Mishra's contemporary take on the classic *Devdas* and also *Jia aur Jia*, also starring Kalki Koechlin. Qureshi, one of the few actresses to successfully shuttle between commercial and indie, will next be seen in a remake of popular US horror film *Oculus* and in Gurinder Chadha's *Viceroy's House*.

Apte will also be busy. Her next, the Ajay Devgn-produced *Parched*, premieres at the Toronto International Film Festival.

She will soon begin shooting with Tamil superstar Rajinikanth and complete her leading lady duties in *Bombairiya*. Success, she knows, is fleeting. "I don't think the struggle is over at all. First you struggle to get a part, then you struggle to keep getting parts and then the struggle is to not get typecast. I feel stability is more important. If I can acquire that a little bit, then I would be happy."

Follow the writer on Twitter @suhani84

**RADHIKA
APTE** 30

Breakthrough As the
seductress in *Ahalya*

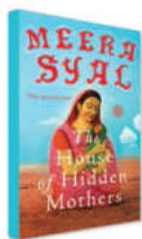
What's next? Anurag Kashyap's
Madly, Tamil film with Rajinikanth



THE OTHER MOTHERS

Meera Syal's new novel is a complicated tapestry about motherhood

By Rosalyn D'Mello



The House of Hidden Mothers
by Meera Syal
Black Swan
Pages 418
Price 399

My mother gave birth to me 30 years ago. She was 42 then, just six years younger than Shyama, the protagonist of Meera Syal's third novel, *The House of Hidden Mothers*. It was a high-risk pregnancy. There had been two miscarriages before me. But my mother was adamant about her desire for a daughter, refusing to heed her doctor's cautionary counsel. She had had two sons, eleven and nine years, before I was born. Maybe they weren't enough. Maybe my mother sought to create someone who would more closely resemble her being, in whom she might seek out her own reflection. Her reasons will perhaps be permanently inaccessible to me

as much as they must have been for her, for the impulse towards motherhood when it isn't necessarily incited by societal pressure or the zeal to conform is a mysterious one that exists outside the periphery of reason and common sense. This irrational yearning is what drives Shyama, a 48-year-old East London-based divorcee, to consider finding a surrogate when her doctor delivers a painful prognosis about her conclusively inhospitable womb.

Shyama is alone in her enthusiasm for pursuing a surrogate. Her young lover, Toby, has his doubts, despite his looming desire to be a father. Her biological daughter is

embarrassed by the decision. Her parents, Prem and Sita, are vociferous about their reluctance to embrace the idea. Shyama goes to a Delhi-based clinic run by Dr Passi, who connects infertile couples from around the world to underprivileged Indian women who are seemingly grateful for the opportunity to rent out their wombs in exchange for a better future for their respective families—women like Mala, whose dream for an education was crushed when her father died and who was considered lucky enough to be married off for an almost negligible dowry, which of course didn't mean she was not her farmer husband Ram's property. It is he who, on learning how much their neighbour had earned by hiring out his wife's womb, prods Mala to consider the possibility. Mala is seduced by the promised wealth and acquiesces, thus permitting Dr Passi to implant in her Toby's seed and an egg from some allegedly unknown donor, setting into motion the novel's unravelling.

Like the other surrogates, Mala is expected to spend the next nine months in a special house, looked after by Passi's staff. However, when Shyama and Toby witness her being subjected to her husband's violence, Mala finds herself playing the third wheel on their flight back to London, where she is to stay during her pregnancy. The plot twist creates a ripple effect.

Mala refuses to be an impassive participant in Shyama's household. As she grows in size and confidence, she begins to claim for herself an agency she never imagined could be possible, while the independent Shyama gradually begins to lose her own. Syal, who herself had a son in her 40s, weaves in every conceivable feminist issue into her complicated tapestry about motherhood, even the horrific Delhi gang rape of December 2012.

Although the novel's culmination is somewhat betrayed by the intense foreshadowing Syal indulges in across its 418 pages, what impels the reader is the immediacy of the psychological portraits she presents of her complex characters and their individual transformations across multiple plot lines. Syal's feminist underpinning is enunciated even before the novel begins, through an epigraph excerpted from Margaret Atwood's novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, about a totalitarian society in which a class of women called "handmaids" are forced to service men of the ruling elite and give birth to their offspring. The reference complicates any easy understanding of India's position as the surrogacy capital of the world. Syal, through her meticulously detailed and insightful foray into the minds and bodies of the many mothers her novel houses, reminds us quite heartrendingly that the world we live in, despite civilisation's many accomplishments, is still an inhospitable womb for women.

Rosalyn D'Mello is a Delhi-based writer



MEERA SYAL

GETTY IMAGES

IT'S STRICTLY PROFESSIONAL

Madhura Pandit's biography focuses more on her father and filmmaker-actor V. Shantaram's work than his personal life

By Mayank Shekhar



V. Shantaram: The Man Who Changed Indian Cinema

Madhura Pandit Jasraj

Hay House

Pages 328

Price Rs 699

(Hardback)

Here's what I dislike about most memoirs: The beginning. They all start from the beginning. Which is often the least interesting part of a public person's life, to begin with. I don't know if this is a local affliction. It's certainly true for the finest memoirs/autobiographies I've read by Indians—whether Khushwant Singh's *Truth, love & a little malice*, Vinod Mehta's *Lucknow Boy*, and since we're talking films, Naseeruddin Shah's *And Then One Day*.

The latest V. Shantaram book is of course not an autobiography. This is his daughter Madhura Pandit Jasraj's attempt at re-encapsulating her father's career.

Much before the star system in Indian cinema, there used to be the studio system.

The unpaid office intern (such as young S.R. Vankudre in the pioneer Baburao Painter's Maharashtra Film Company in Kolhapur) could well be the lead actor. Which is how Vankudre (who later named himself V. Shantaram) made his screen debut in 1921, with the silent movie *Surekha Haran*, a mythological film, obviously.

There is of course much in Shantaram's early life and career to marvel at. His first job was as a manual labourer in the railways. He went on to act/direct/produce 81 films, besides founding two studios—Prabhat and Rajkamal. We're looking at a boy who joined the movie industry in 1920 and remained associated with it until he died in 1990. That is seven years short of the complete history of Indian cinema—from silent to talkie to colour to TV... You wish to get a sense of the changing world around Shantaram—films included. There is little of that in the book.

On the personal front, the portrait that emerges of Shantaram is of a man obsessed with his work, yes; but of an asexual filmmaker repeatedly spurring advances from his ever-willing heroines. As a studio boss, he seems wholly selfless, doing everything to keep the flock together, while his jealous, conniving partners gang up to dislodge him from the Pune-based Prabhat Film Company. Mihir Bose's seminal work *Bollywood: A History* cites Shantaram's son Kiran's biography to suggest that the reason his partners deserted him was because Shantaram had broken a cardinal rule: fallen for an employee of the company, a much



INDIAN EXPRESS

V. SHANTARAM

younger actor Jayashree whom he married later. Madhura is Shantaram's daughter from his first wife Vimal.

Shantaram bounced back with a new studio, Rajkamal, having moved to Bombay. By the time the first Rajkamal film was ready (in the latter half of 1943), we're told, he had become father of two more children—Charusheela (his daughter from Vimal), and Kiran, the biographer (his son from Jayashree). Polygamy may have been culturally acceptable then. Intricacies of such a relationship inspire much curiosity now. Madhura, the insider, dwells no further on this politics, sticking to her father's professional CV.

Which brings me to the book's title: *The Man Who Changed Indian Cinema*. Was Shantaram that man? In the early years of talkies, movies mainly meant 'historicals'/mythologicals' laden with songs. *Duniya Na Mane* (1937; a film on child marriage) onwards, Shantaram did prove that it was possible to make films on sensitive, sensible, socially conscious subjects that were also commercially successful. Shantaram displayed staggering range—his *Do Ankhen Barah Haath* (1957, on prison reforms) picked up both the Golden Bear at Berlin and a Golden Globe, and remains fresh in public memory still.

Besides being a progressive filmmaker, Shantaram was an institution builder, which truly explains the size of his contribution. He also introduced a posse of talents over six decades. The current generation will still know Mumtaz and Jeetendra from this book.

And yeah, he was a wonderful family man. Madhura's warm love letter to her deceased father is testimony to that, even if it feels like a series of Wikipedia entries. To use the most terrible film reviewing cliché, since this is a book about films: it's really long; but you must read it, if you're a Shantaram fan! Well.

Mayank Shekhar is a film critic and runs *TheW14.com*

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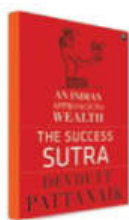


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THE GITA OF BUSINESS

Devdutt Pattanaik's new book pulls out a pithy understanding of philosophy and the business world

By Gayatri Jayaraman



The Success Sutra:
An Indian Approach
to Wealth
by Devdutt Pattanaik
Aleph
Pages 152
Price Rs 399

Like the Bhagavad Gita contains both the peaking and the essence of the philosophy of the Mahabharata, *The Success Sutra* contains what it is you really need to know about Devdutt Pattanaik's previous, and more complex, book on the give and take of Indian philosophy, the *Business Sutra*. Pattanaik uses a single, recurring image—that of the sacrificial fire, the *yajaman*, or the propitiator; his offering, *svaha*; the *devata*, who delivers the fruit of worship, *tathastu*; the fire or *yajna* itself—to simplify the debit and credit of not trade itself, but the entire aim of the endeavour: success.

That's not where the similarities end.

The Success Sutra is slim, pithy and pointed. Further, like the Gita, while it is not its only argument, its most compelling argument is of the violence that becomes necessary to achieve one's end. From the Pandavas, who seek to build Indraprastha and are told by Krishna that they must either "burn the forest" or "not dream of the city", which speaks of the conquest of modern society over nature, to Balram, who harvests the Yamuna by damming it in his interests, which speaks of harnessing nature's forces to suit man's interest, to Dadichi, whose analogy he uses to explain the control and sharing of knowledge, and thereby power, Pattanaik's terse and succinct mastery over the Indian parable mines the myths for modern *sutras* or these aphoristic lessons for our time.

All his justifications of conquest are not hedonistic. He distinguishes also between necessary violence and that which is exploitative. Thus the veneration of the cow becomes symbolic of a society's need for regeneration. The battle of the *asuras* against the *devas* becomes the necessary violence of those who would be immortal versus those who hold wealth under the ground. One of Pattanaik's strongest comparisons is in his use of this analogy to illustrate man's exploitation of elements—wind and fire to extract metals, and water and earth to extract crops—both of which form the foundation for our progress. Within these are the larger issues of *karma*: all that is taken has a consequence, intended or unwitting. Within these powerful instructions is built



5 LESSONS FROM *THE SUCCESS SUTRA*

- 1 VIOLENCE IS NECESSARY** "The story of the *devas* defeating the *asuras* is a narrative acknowledgement of the violence inherent in creating wealth."
- 2 YOU HAVE THE POWER TO GIVE OR TAKE LIFE** "At times, he will be expected to be ruthless. At other times, he will be expected to be kind."
- 3 REGENERATION OF RESOURCES CONSUMED IS A DUTY** "Words like regeneration and renewal are intrinsic to the *yajna*. They compensate for the harm done by violence."
- 4 NO ONE SUCCEEDS ALONE** "Every link in the chain is worshipped; each one is sacred and significant."
- 5 BOTH SIDES MUST WIN** "Only when we see each other as the source of *tathastu* will we genuinely collaborate and connect with each other."

an awareness of what we become when we act and why that action is necessary.

Several metaphors repeat from the previous work, the transformation of Shiva into Shankar, the worship of the orchestrated links in the chain that contribute to success that are unique to the Indian way of life, and the astrological configuration of business partners and Pattanaik's informative signature doodles. But beyond encapsulating a larger work, Pattanaik seems to be asking if you are aware of what you really want when you seek success. His aim is to remind you that the bandying about of a glossy term overlays several layers of complexity beneath. The underlying message is that 'success' is not a clear-cut path with one defined outcome. Leaders who eventually achieve a goal must cut a path that discomfits many, take those difficult decisions, and often suffer the consequences even as they look to enjoy the fruits of their labours. Before you seek that monolithic success, are you willing to, as Arjuna had to, take your mark and place your arrows where you must?

Follow the writer on Twitter @Gayatri_J

Graphic by GAURAV KUMRA

NUMBER IT RIGHT

What is the optimum number of posts to publish on social networking sites per day?

Source: setupablogtoday.com;
Last updated: April 2015



twitter tattle

Who's the Cute Guy?

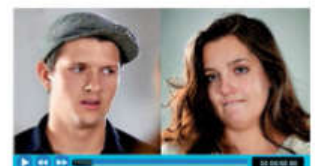


A young woman took to Twitter to locate a "cute" guy she'd seen on MG Road in Gurgaon. Priyanka R.P. tweeted a photo of a young man, with the hashtag #CuteGuyAlert, and requested fellow tweeters to help her find him. The hashtag soon began trending and even though the guy is yet to be found, Priyanka remains hopeful.

viral video



A man's performance during an audition on the reality show *The X Factor* moved more than 11 million netizens.



College sweethearts dissecting their relationships post break-up touched more than 9 million netizens.



A video of a Kansas farmer catching fish using a drone wowed more than one million.

Follow the writer on Twitter @lkummi

web win

Mask Unmask

Pamela Casey, an attorney based in Alabama, posted a video warning parents that many teens are storing inappropriate pictures and videos under a falsely-named calculator app. Demonstrating what the app looks like and how it works, the video has 2 million views.



pixel perfect

The Labours of Love

More than 8,000 people shared a Facebook album of photographer Arjun Kamath and his team. Called 'Coming Out', the photo series illustrates the struggles of the LGBT community through beautiful, stylised pictures. Depicted through a relationship between two women, Alpana and Maitreyi, the pictures show how the two lovers come out of the closet, expressing their love openly, until reality—society's response—forces them back into the closet again.



net tribute

Death of Innocence



Cartoonists all over the Web world have tweeted and posted on social networks their tribute to Aylan Kurdi, the 3-year-old Syrian refugee who was washed ashore in Turkey. One moving tribute, posted with the hashtag #HumanityWashedAshore, depicts Kurdi with angel wings while other creatures of the sea are seen mourning his loss.

Cartoonists all over the Web world have tweeted and posted on social networks their tribute to Aylan Kurdi, the 3-year-old Syrian refugee who was washed ashore in Turkey. One moving

insta chatter

Picture This

Sociality Barbie is an Instagram account that parodies the annoying photos people post on social networks. It includes pictures in the lap of nature with profound captions, no make-up selfies and cups of coffee among other things, only all this featuring a barbie doll in the frame.



what's new App Alert

Next predicts what emojis and words you're likely to use in your text messages.



Simply Piano helps you learn the basics of piano playing virtually.





The **DEATH** of Handwriting

What do we lose when we cease to write with our fingers? Quite a lot more than we know, says new science.

By Gayatri Jayaraman

Dead men tell no tales, well, not anymore. They used to, when they would hand-write their suicide notes. Today, of the 20-30 suicide notes they receive every month, says Dr Chittaranjan Behera, assistant professor at the Department of Forensic Medicine of AIIMS, most are e-suicide notes: either text messages, WhatsApp messages, video recordings on mobile phones or email. So while once forensic analysts such as Behera would look at pen pressure and slant to tell you what state of mind the victim was in, or if coercion had a role to play, whether he was lying when he made a dying declaration, today, the science is necessarily shifting to the analysis of texting patterns and the physical forensic evidence of fingerprints on the last punched key. But not only is neither as revealing about a person's state of mind, socially it marks a key departure from 'reading' a person: we now operate with technological barriers and our fingers now trace less of a connect to our states of mind.

This is because ubiquitous technology makes our fingers take robotic paths over the QWERTY keyboard, unlike pencils and pens that are prone to take thought-provoking curves over paper. While the latter seems robotic with practice—in fact it translates meaning to text—the former requires little brain activity beyond locating and punching a key, explains Ramesh Iyer.

Iyer's NGO, Right Writing, has already trained thousands of children in government schools in Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra this year through targeted workshops. His latest phase rolled out handwriting improvement to 150 children in Palghar, Maharashtra, in July this year. In Chalai, Thiruvananthapuram, Iyer designed 20-hour modules of handwriting exercises as part of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, after realising that while government schools are attempting to incorporate computer literacy programmes, several of the students were unable to identify alphabets for the keyboard, although they type them, because their exposure to actual writing practice was so inconsistently taught and weak.

While his personal mission has

been to target the handwriting of underprivileged children through state-run programmes, Iyer receives a maximum number of inquiries from students in professional courses such as law, he says. "The only time a student uses his handwriting extensively is in exams. Because they mostly photocopy and even photograph notes during the year, their hand muscles do not move fast enough during exams, so they come to us for help," he says.

The atrophy begins early.

It is also dangerous. Handwriting skills are getting so bad that in January this year, the Medical Council of India instructed state councils to formalise a prescription format in all caps for doctors that was made mandatory effective April to counter the ill-effects of wrong information being imparted to patients due to bad handwriting. The move came after numerous concerns expressed, by Health Minister J.P. Nadda in Parliament last year about illegible prescriptions, and by Animesh Jain of the Department of Community Medicine and Prateek Rastogi of the Department of Forensic Medicine at Kasturba Medical College, Manipal, in 2009 in the *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, who found the grave impact of illegible handwriting to range from medical negligence to medication errors. In 2006, the American National Academy of Sciences's Institute of Medicine found that 7,000 deaths a year globally could be traced back to bad handwriting.

Already, children as young as four or five have begun to use touch-screen mobile phones and tablets even before they learn to write. The process of getting them to commit pencil to paper, then, is becoming a nightmarish one for nursery schoolteachers. Parents of young children, Shantanu Bhattacharya, father of nine-year-old Teesta in Mumbai, or Kaveri Ahuja, mother to three school-going children in the Nilgiris, have all started handwriting classes to supplement the decreasing stability of their children's motor skills. Children just don't take to copy books anymore. "There is definitely a loss of ability and neatness due to a lack of practice, and I can't help but worry," says Bhattacharya. For

Ahuja, who sees the skill as a dying art, good handwriting also comprises good grooming. Does it really matter? In America, the draconian practice of cursive writing has long been dropped from public schools. The Common Core standards call for a shift to keyboard skills after kindergarten.

But a 2012 study by Karin James of Indiana University and Laura Engelhardt of the University of Austin in Texas, US, in *Elsevier* journal shows that that could be a mistake. The study notes that the diversity of writing allows the brain to recognise that the various ways in which a letter may be written does not impact the absolute meaning of that letter. An 'a' written in any handwriting remains an 'a'. Children drawing the letter freehand were found to show greater brain activ-

.....
**People who take notes
 on laptops as opposed to
 those who bring papers
 and pens to meetings
 show a lesser absorption
 of new information.**

ity than those typing it on a computer.

In the field of neurology, correlations are made between what is revealed by handwriting. Research by Ashok Jammi et al at the Guru Nanak Institute of Technology in Hyderabad, now at the Hawassa University in Ethiopia, has attempted to establish the link between the handwriting of a patient and the intensity of neurodegenerative disease or its function as a symptom or detection tool. The study examines both online and offline handwriting—online using digital tablets and pens. "Since handwriting is a task that requires the maximum muscular control, any signs of deviations in handwriting can be possible indications of neurodegenerative disease," the researchers note. While the use of handwriting to detect Alzheimer's and Parkinson's is routine, the principle is now being extended to other diseases such as apraxia (a motor disorder) and aboulia (an inability to act decisively).

In Patina International Inclusive School, Hyderabad, experiments are underway to observing the impact of therapeutic techniques such as playing Hindustani classical music while students with identified learning disabilities write. Special educators Rajesh Ramachandran and Anuragini Singh found that formation of sentence spacing, cognition and vocabulary and spelling were enhanced by using music to improve handwriting.

New emerging research has already begun to explore what is lost when we lose our handwriting. *Palimpsest*, a new book by Matthew Battles, explores our relationship with the written word and how writing is more alive and indicative of human activity—pithy, aphoristic public writing is not Twitter-centric for instance, he points out, but has existed since Pompeii—than human speech, and how the formality or informality of writing translates speech and becomes the necessary idiom of the time.

In a recent edition of the *Harvard Business Review*, Maggy McGloin notes that people who take notes on laptops as opposed to those who bring papers and pens to meetings show a lesser absorption of new information. Citing a study by Princeton University's Pam Mueller and University of California, Los Angeles's Daniel Oppenheimer, McGloin makes the distinction between mindless transcription, which is what human society tends towards with endless typing, and absorbed writing.

No matter how much science and technology advances, modern computational methods have not yet been able to draw up an algorithm that allows us to predict what a human being is capable of, point out researchers Sandeep Dang and Mahesh Kumar of the Electronics and Communications Department at the Shree Siddhivinayak Educational Group of Institutions, Bilaspur, in an article published in the *International Journal of Advanced Research and Computer Science and Software Engineering* in 2014.

In short, till a computer can build a model of the human mind, we will need handwriting to predict what the human mind is capable of.

Follow the writer on Twitter @Gayatri_J

BELOVED BLOOD

Filicide, the murder of one's own child, baffles psychiatrists. Some murders that horrified the nation as mothers were suspected or accused.

▶ Harpreet Kaur 2000

Punjab politician, Bibi Jagir Kaur, was sentenced to five years of imprisonment for illegal confinement and forceful abortion of daughter Harpreet, 19, who died in mysterious circumstances.



GETTY IMAGES

▶ Aarushi Talwar 2008

Controversy dogs Aarushi's murder although a CBI court put the parents of the murdered 14-year-old school girl—Nupur and Rajesh—behind bars.



▶ Nirupama Pathak 2010

The reason remains a mystery but mother Sudha was under scrutiny for the death of the 23-year-old journalist from Jharkhand. Investigation inconclusive.



▶ Deepti Chhikara 2012

A Delhi school teacher, Chhikara left her husband and was allegedly killed by her mother, brother and uncle in the name of honour. Her body was found in Uttarakhand.



▶ Kiran Kohli 2014

The 23-year-old Faridabad girl was allegedly killed by her mother with the help of her brother last year for "drinking, smoking and clubbing".



PERFECT MURDER

THE 125TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WORLD'S BEST-LOVED BEST TIME TO CELEBRATE THE PERFECT MURDERS SHE PE



Agatha Christie

THE CHRISTIE FORMULA

Academics from Queen's University, Belfast, have come with an algorithm on her novels. This is how her victims died.

12%
BLUDGEONED

10%
STRANGLED

12%
STABBED

13%
SHOT

*Remaining were killed using other methods

MURDERS OF THE QUEEN OF CRIME

ED CRIME-FICTION WRITER **AGATHA CHRISTIE**, BORN ON SEPTEMBER 15, 1890, IS THE NAMED, THAT GOT EXPOSED THANKS TO THE LITTLE GREY CELLS OF HER DETECTIVES.



KEEP IT SIMPLE

Her murders were simple and clean. No hired murderers or messy group murders. No hacking, burning or carrying around of bodies with blood going drip, drip, drip all over.



CHOOSE YOUR POISON

Christie had worked as a nurse and knew a lot about poisons, her favourite means of murder. Means of transport also had a gender divide: boats and planes were more likely to have a male killer, whilst cars and trucks usually led to a female criminal.

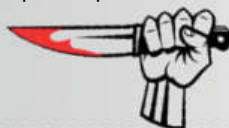


HOLD YOUR TONGUE

In her stories, victims were often those who knew or had witnessed something they shouldn't have and then blabbered about it or had started to blackmail the criminal.

DO IT YOURSELF

Christie's murderers did it all by themselves, because to get away with murder, no one else should know about it. The more people involved, the more get killed—to keep them quiet.



MAKING IT BORING

Often, her complex cases look boring initially. Her murderers left clues at the crime scene, making those look like a failed robbery, etc. Just to put the police off scent.

THE RIGHT LOCATION

A perfect murder needs to be staged at a location that would have no connection between the victim and the murderer, at a place neither normally visit—often at a picnic or a party, in Christie's books.



ALL IN THE FAMILY

Most murders happened within the family circle. The killer was almost always emotionally involved with the victim—usually a spouse or a relative who killed for money, love, revenge or to cover up another crime.

6.5%
PUSHED OFF

35%
POISONED

Graphic by PREM SINGH GIRI



FATHER FIGURE

Actor **Neeraj Kabi**, best known for his compelling performance as a Jain preacher in the National Award-winner *Ship of Theseus*, now appears to be the go-to guy for playing Mahatma Gandhi. After appearing as the Father of the Nation in Shyam Benegal's TV series *Samvidhaan*, he will again don the round spectacles for Gurinder Chadha's *Viceroy's House*. Kabi will continue to play a father, albeit with shades of grey. He will be seen as one of India's more infamous fathers in *Talvar*, which is based on the Aarushi murder case.

ALL GROWN UP

It has been two decades since she impressed all as the little girl in Mani Ratnam's *Anjali*. But the National Award-winning child actor chose to stay away from show business and even lived in Singapore for five years to escape the media glare. Now, she is back in action in Kollywood. **Shamlee** will soon be seen in movies with popular actors, Vikram Prabhu and Dhanush. What's more, she also has a guardian in the industry in superstar Ajith, who is married to her sister. He already shot her look test for her upcoming Malayalam film.



EYECATCHERS



HOME INGREDIENTS

Indian-born, Britain-based chef **Atul Kochhar**, best known for his acclaimed restaurant Benares in London and winning not one but two Michelin stars, is finally going to serve his countrymen to some of his delicious fare such as aloo kachaloo chaat and masala chai brulee. The 46-year-old chef will set up two restaurants—NRI and Lima—in Mumbai in October. Expect Indian cuisine with an innovative modern spin.

SUNNY SIDE UP



GO FIGURE 162

This is the score of 12-year-old Indian-origin, Essex-based Lydia Sebastian in the Mensa IQ test, which is higher than that of physicists Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking.



Sunny Leone is making headlines for all the right reasons. She gave it back to senior CPI leader Atul Kumar Anjan, who had criticised her latest condom ad, asking him to focus on helping the needy instead. Leone took a step forward in her film career after landing a role in Karan Johar's next, *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil*. The film requires her to seduce Bollywood's most eligible bachelor Ranbir Kapoor. Given her body of work, that shouldn't be too hard.

THE WRITE CHOICE

Researching for a film on the life of celebrated Urdu writer Saadat Hasan Manto, actor-director **Nandita Das** visited the Pak Tea House in Lahore. "Once a vibrant place for many deliberations by thinkers, writers and artists," she wrote on

Facebook. "It is still a place that endeavours to revive the culture of debate, pluralism and liberalism." Das also met Manto's daughter, Nuzhat Jalal and his sister-in-law Zakia Jalal.



HOW WAS THE WEEK?



GOOD

Apurvi Chandel

The 22-year-old shooter won the silver medal in women's 10m air rifle event at the ISSF World Cup.



BAD

Anish Kapoor

The British-Indian artist's sculpture, *Dirty Corner*, in France was vandalised for a second time and covered with anti-Semitic graffiti.

Compiled by **Suhani Singh**
Follow the writer on Twitter @suhani84

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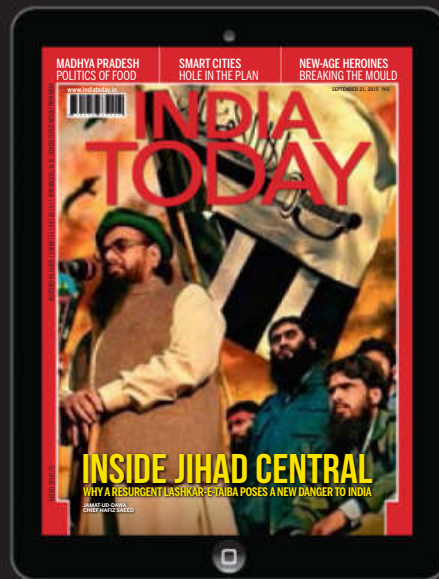
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Woman

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LEADING FROM THE FRONT

Dimple Yadav,
Member of Parliament,
Samajwadi Party

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contents

16 Dressed to Lead

Wave your sartorial wand to sprinkle stardust on the boardroom



PHOTOGRAPH BY ASHIMA NARAIN/ROLI BOOKS

12 The Culinary Queen

Zarine Khan shares secrets from her famed kitchen

8 Strike a Balance

Find happiness even while juggling priorities in life

10 Vertical Limit

An awe-inspiring expedition of two Indian sisters



PHOTOGRAPH BY RAJWANT RAWAT

Skirt Not So Serious by Pallavi Mohan

Top H&M

Wedge heels Steve Madden

Bag & earrings Dior

Watch Omega

Sunglasses Oxydo

4 COVER STORY

9 PARENTING

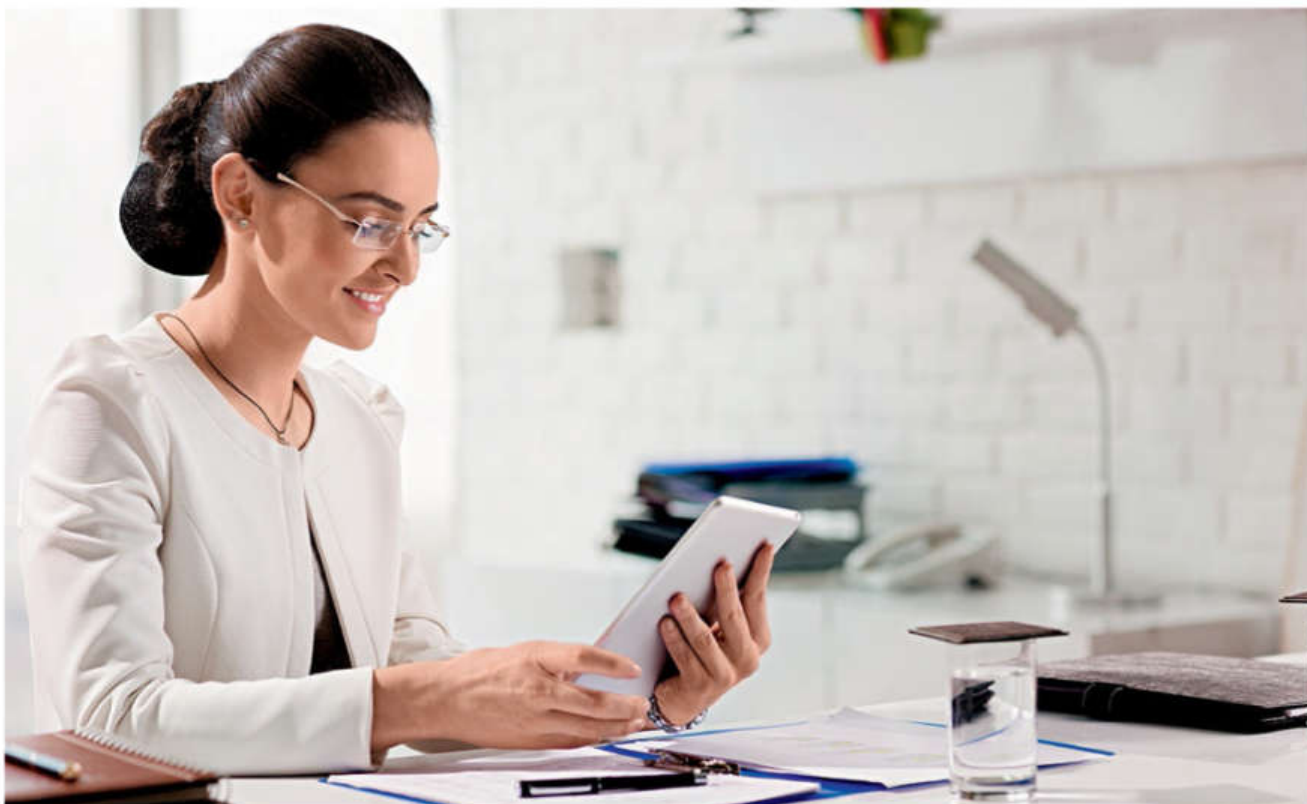
22 Q&A

Cover Photo Rajwant Rawat

Please send your letters and suggestions to feedback.woman@intoday.com or via snail mail to India Today Woman, India Today Mediaplex, FC -8, Sector 16 -A, Flim City Noida 201301, (UP)



Do you think working fewer hours at optimal times make you more productive?



IMAGES BAZAAR

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

READERS WRITE IN

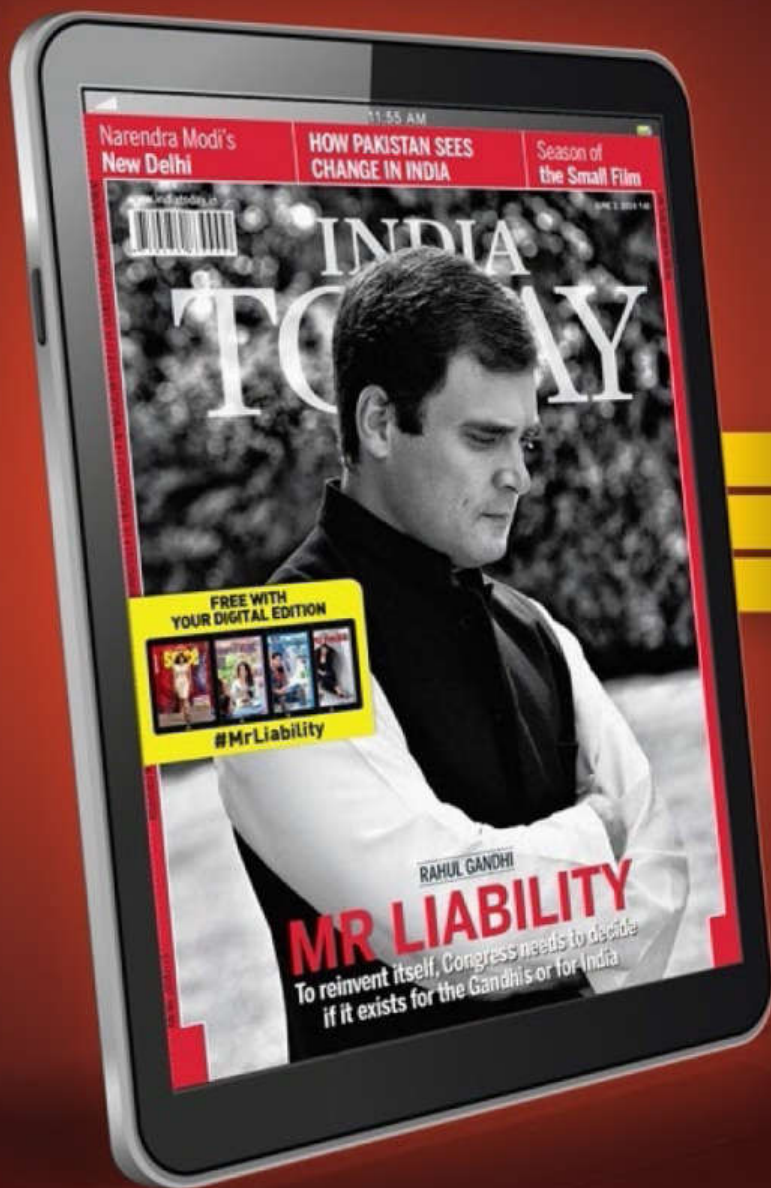
- ☑ Working fewer hours can be productive if those hours are utilised doing work dedicatedly. Early morning work can be highly beneficial, as during this time, the mind is fresh and open to ideas. Working day can be tiring, even more if there are no breaks in between. Just before going to bed, you can revise all day's work in a jiffy so that next day, you can start from where you last stopped. **Manisha Kumari, Delhi**
- ☑ Working under pressure gets more work done as deadlines need to be met. I believe once you give yourself some leeway, then the work drags on as it is, and either you end up wasting time or lose out on priority work.
Jayashree Narayanan, Delhi
- ☑ I believe working at one's own pace and convenience at home or office helps in optimum output in a shorter period. This happens due to the mental and physical harmony needed to complete a job effectively. Women who would like to work part-time, will definitely try to give their best within the chosen working hours. **Sarita Bery, Bangalore**



Ten winning letters from the India Today Woman online poll will receive a Lakme gift hamper. Winners will be notified by email. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

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Dimple Yadav is at
home at politics



“Where there is a will, there is a way”

IN A PARTY DOMINATED BY MEN AND MISOGYNY, DIMPLE YADAV SEEMS AN ANOMALY. THE MP FROM KANNAUJ, UTTAR PRADESH, IS DETERMINED TO CHANGE THE SAMAJWADI PARTY IMAGE ONE SCHEME AT A TIME.

By KAVEREE BAMZAI

The MP from Kannauj, Uttar Pradesh, Dimple Yadav glides noiselessly into the sunlit room, overlooking a well-maintained lawn where football is played every evening. It's mid-morning in Lucknow's most powerful political home and her husband Akhilesh Yadav is in the room next door, dealing with a steady stream of visitors. The children will return from school later in the day; son Arjun, 9, wheeling his cycle through the house unmindful of his famous parents. It is here in this home at Vikramaditya Marg that key decisions are taken, affecting the lives of over 200 million in India's most populous state.

Yadav is a second-term MP and the current chief minister's wife. She is the gentle but firm voice of women in a party dominated by men and misogyny, and a working mother trying hard to supervise the lives of her three children as well as ensuring the well-being of her constituency and state.

As an Army officer's daughter, she is uniquely placed for the challenge—her peripatetic upbringing which took her from Bhatinda to Andaman and Nicobar Islands, has instilled in her the ability to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. And she has done well—helping her husband kickstart

calls it “Dilli ka mijaz” and comments on how fickle it can be, creating meteoric rises and equally sudden downfalls.

Despite being attacked for having “five-and-a-half chief ministers” and frequently subjected to tongue lashings by “Netaji” (as he calls his father Mulayam), Akhilesh says he's intent on creating a

Sabha election from Firozabad in 2009 to former Samajwadi Party MP Raj Babbar, the 37-year-old seems to be at home in politics now, slowly but surely emerging from the shadow of her husband, who still remains so fiercely protective of her that he sits in on her interviews. She accepts it with good grace, speaking

HAVING A FATHER-IN-LAW KNOWN FOR HIS ANTI-WOMEN STATEMENTS DOESN'T BOTHER YADAV. SHE, LIKE HER HUSBAND, BELIEVES THE MEDIA JUMPED TO CONCLUSIONS ON THE BADAUN RAPE CASE, 2014.

initiatives that are slowly sowing the seeds for a bright future in the state.

Having a father-in-law who is renowned for his anti-women statements doesn't seem to bother Yadav, who, like her husband, believes the media jumped to grisly conclusions on the Badaun rape case of 2014 and condemned the government without much thought. But neither she nor Akhilesh seem bitter about the constant media exposure and perennial criticism. Akhilesh

Samajwadi state where there is sustainable development with inclusive growth. Be it the Agra Expressway for which land has been acquired seamlessly, or the Lucknow Metro which is being planned with the help of Delhi Metro expert E Sreedharan; be it an IT Park run by HCL or an Infosys headquarter; be it 500 government medical jobs or 2,000 Kamdhenu dairies across the state, Akhilesh seems to have been busy.

But so has his unassuming wife. Having lost her first Lok

her mind when she has to, and keeping her own counsel when needed.

The BCom graduate from Lucknow University is said to be the driving force behind several initiatives on health, family welfare and women in the state. She pushed for setting up of the Rani Laxmi Bai Mahila Samman Prakoshth, with a corpus of ₹100 crore, to help women in distress. The Prakoshth runs eight flagship programmes—among them a web portal, Vikalp, exclusively dedicated



Dimple and Akhilesh Yadav

PHOTOGRAPH BY REUBEN SINGH

HER PARENTING MANTRA

- ▶ Where there's a will, there is a way. Manage your time and perform the various responsibilities with sincerity and success.
- ▶ Spend afternoons with the children after they return from school.
- ▶ Use the Army dictum of devotion to duty. Follow through on everything. Be disciplined and committed.
- ▶ Involve people in whatever you do—which is why it is not unusual to see them walking in and out of interviews. Says Yadav, "It's a very good career if you are willing to serve the people with sincerity. We will not thrust anything on our children. At present, the children are small. When they will grow up, they will choose their areas of interest."

to the online registration of complaints by women; a gender sensitisation training programme called Nav Chetana for police personnel; a database of all 74 mahila thanas in the state; a Know Your Laws, Ask For Your

Rights awareness programme; and a Police and Youth—A Partnership for Gender Equality programme in universities. Sutapa Sanyal, director general of Mahila Samman Prakoshth, describes Yadav as "extremely

generous with her guidance".

Yadav is also propelling the State Nutrition Mission along with her aide Juhie Singh. Singh, daughter of retired state chief secretary Akhand Pratap Singh and member of Samajwadi Party, is

chairperson of the Uttar Pradesh State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and works closely with Yadav on the project. She is all praise for her, calling her "dignified, sensitive and action-oriented". "She wants to make women, especially those from the rural areas, economically independent," Singh says.

Yadav is clearly Akhilesh's best bet to reach out to the 100 million women in his state, and there is no doubt that UP's first couple is in election mode already. There is talk that Samajwadi Party has already begun screening candidates for the critical 2017 Assembly elections. As Yadav herself says, "The younger generation is different. They want results. They do not give a second chance to those who do not perform and deliver."

Which is why she seems to lose no opportunity to make herself heard, whether it is in her first halting speech in the Lok Sabha last year, when she misquoted American poet Robert Frost but aggressively countered frequent interruptions, or in insisting that the women helpline 1090 be called a 'power line'. "We didn't want the tired old *bechari* image of women for this helpline," she says. 'Inspired' by her, the state transport department is also readying to launch a 'pink auto' service in Lucknow exclusively for women passengers.

Akhilesh is happy to cede this space to his wife, and on a recent visit to Europe which saw the twinning of Kannauj, the city of *itr*, with Grasse, France's perfume capital, the 42-year-old accompanied her as she spoke on women empowerment at an international symposium in Rotterdam, Netherlands. The

two have time for lots of chitchat—if she can gently mock him for his stated conservative mindset, he can rib her about the sari she is wearing, which has come all the way from Delhi (a beautiful linen Anavila).

As she walks out into the corridor of her home, studded with a gigantic Firozabad chandelier, a massive table with Saharanpur woodwork, with a floor decorated with Farrukhabad inlay work, she talks about moving schools in her childhood. It's an experience that gave her the ability for quick change of pace—an ability that comes in handy as she moves between Lucknow and Akhilesh's home town Saifai; between their annual vacation in London and her constituency in Kannauj.

This is the era of 24X7 politics and she seems aware of the criticism of her husband being too easygoing. She calls him a “man of vision”, praises his “simplicity and accessibility” and says his career is on an “upward trajectory”.

As for balancing her time between work and children, she says, “Where there is a will, there is a way. This simple dictum provides you the ability to manage your time and perform the various responsibilities with sincerity and success.” Even as her husband makes a casual remark about his children growing up too fast and not being able to spend too much time with them, he quickly corrects himself, “Par hum bhi toh Netaji se alag rahe,” referring to his time at boarding at Sainik School in Dholpur.

Dimple Yadav's role models are the same as his:



Dimple Yadav with children Aditi, Arjun and Tina

PHOTOGRAPH BY MANEESH AGNIHOTRI

Mahatma Gandhi, Ram Manohar Lohia and ‘Netaji’. Ask her about the difference between being in the 15th Lok Sabha, where the Samajwadi Party had 23 MPs and now with just five all Yadavs from the family) and

she says, “The number of members of a particular party is not so relevant, commitment for speaking for the welfare of the people counts. The present dispensation in the Lok Sabha gives an impression

that those in power have no will to solve the problems facing the poor and have-nots of the society.”

Election speeches for the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections in 2017 seem to be writing themselves.

The scales are not equally balanced between work and personal priorities at all times. It depends on the stage of life one is at. At some point, career will take precedence; at others personal needs will be more important. The importance of prioritisation is vital.

LEARN TO PRIORITISE

Being able to identify what requires attention at which point is key in being able to achieve excellence and satisfaction at work or home. I have gained much more by being able to prioritise correctly rather than spending all my energy in trying to balance things. There have been several times where I have sought flexibility, whereas others when I have gone full throttle to achieve work goals.

COMMUNICATE YOUR NEEDS

I recall upon returning from my first maternity leave that I was unhappy for some time because I felt my role was not demanding enough, whereas my manager thought he was providing me with flexibility. It is not only crucial to identify priorities but also to communicate them.

MAKE YOUR OWN CHOICES

The keyword that determines life's balance is 'choice'. As women, we are expected to fulfill various roles, from being a mother, daughter and wife to an employee. These social norms and expectations shape the decisions that women make. It is essential, however, to make this choice for oneself, rather than be dictated by societal expectations or family.

STRIKE A BALANCE

A balanced life, or having it all

The Choice is Yours

NAVIGATE THE CROSSROADS IN LIFE

BY BRINGING IN EQUILIBRIUM



IMAGES BAZAAR

is only possible by defining what 'all' entails and working towards that. My choices have driven me to strive for both an ambitious career trajectory and a fulfilling family life. It has not been easy and has led to certain anxious moments but clarity and conviction is what has helped sail me through. It is a myth that only working women have to strive for balance. I have seen friends who do not work but have to strive equally hard to juggle between family responsibilities and what they want.

SUPPORT STRUCTURE

It is critical to have a support

structure at home. Family members and your spouse will play an important role. One should not shy away from asking them to step in to share the responsibility. My husband and I alternate between our children's PTA meetings and he is clued in on about what is happening at their schools.

REMAIN COMMITTED TO YOUR WORK

Be open and honest with your employer. To ensure that you are valued as an employee, it is important to be dedicated and display commitment.

Increasing awareness and sensitisation has led to various

policies such as flexible maternity leaves and child care with the aim of creating support systems that women can rely upon. Organisations are willing to work around the needs of their employees and ensure a healthy work-life balance for them. As a professional, the key for you but is to remain fully committed and firm when faced with demands.

I had a challenging time juggling between two continents for eighteen months as my husband and children relocated back to India while I stayed on in London. I relied heavily on family support and technology to remain connected and flexibility from my employer to travel to India as and when I required.

FOCUS ON YOUR HEALTH

Women are expected to be the primary caregivers for the family and that role can take precedence over others.

However, we must not neglect our own health and well-being in this process. Looking after yourself is important in ensuring that you are able to meet the challenging demands of today's times. Letting go of stress is key to maintaining physical and mental well-being. Finding some 'me' time and pursuing hobbies and passions go a long way in making us holistic individuals.



ANURANJITA KUMAR
Managing Director, Chief
Human Resources Officer,
Citi South Asia, Mumbai

Practice, Don't Preach

CHILDREN ARE A REFLECTION OF THEIR PARENTS.
RAISE THEM MINDFULLY FOR BEST RESULTS.



IMAGES BAZAAR

Parenting is about being present for ourselves and for our children in the here and now. When we are mindful, we create the inner space to reach out to our own wisdom and respond with clear thinking, understanding and accepting 'what is'. I have observed that my mindlessness hooks my children's mindlessness. However, if I stay mindful, it immediately has a similar effect on them.

THE INSIDE-OUT APPROACH

As parents, we have to go with the principle that I have to first work on myself. Whatever issues you might be facing with your child, the question is not what your child needs to do, but what you need to reflect on or do as a parent. For example, if your child is struggling in studies, rather than just criticising him, you could step back and reflect on,

'What do I need to do as a parent?'. 'How can I help him in his study skills?'

BE ACCEPTING

Tell your child, I accept and love you the way you are. You are unique, you are different and you are you. I will not compare you with others, I will not constantly keep expecting and demanding what you might not be able to do or give. At the core of parenting, there needs to be acceptance.

FOCUS ON GROWTH

Buddhist Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh describes how each one of us have both negative seeds (anger, rage, jealousy, hatred) and wholesome seeds (love, joy, gratitude, compassion). According to him, what will blossom depends on the seeds we water and nurture. This goes very much against the

common parenting norm of 'fix the child'. In our anxiety to correct them, we end up lecturing them on their irresponsible lifestyle, fixing tuition teachers for all the subjects they are weak in, or criticising them for their wrong choices. The more problems we see, the more we crank up our negativity.

ENCOURAGE, NOT HINDER

Every child is wired to grow, explore, learn and flourish. Look at the toddler who is learning to walk, he takes a tentative step forward, looks at his parents with a proud smile, takes another step and then, maybe falls down. There is no sense of embarrassment, shame or self-doubt. So where does it start going wrong? Let us take the example of the same child again. What if we started to tell the baby that he has to try harder, make sure he

bends forward, or that if he straightens his knees a little or looks forward, he might move better. I am sure very soon he might give up and not want to try much.

Sounds quite ridiculous, right? But that's exactly what we are doing with our older children. Whenever they stop trying or moving forward we want to immediately label them without finding out why it is happening.

ANCHORS OF PARENTING

There are five essential anchors of parenting that are interlinked and flow from one to another. Connect is the foundation; laying down nourishing soil replete with love, worthiness, joy, recognitions and positive energy. Coaching is about building necessary life skills in children through an understanding of their unique wiring. Care is about nurturing ourselves for a more wholesome life. Community is about building caring ecosystems for children to thrive in. Commit is about sustaining the courage and compassion for our wholehearted journey.



DR SHELJA SEN
Child & Adolescent
Psychologist and Family
Therapist, Delhi

 EXPERIENCE

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

IN A COMPELLING TALE OF MANY AWE-INSPIRING FIRSTS, TWINS NUNGSHI AND
TASHI MALIK CONQUER THE HOLY GRAIL OF CLIMBING CHALLENGES

BY KARISHMA GOENKA

PHOTOGRAPH BY M ZHAZO

Nungshi (left)
and Tashi Malik



Nungshi Malik wakes up with a start and she nudges her twin sister Tashi Malik, “We dozed off. We have no rifle or equipment with us. We have to find the rest of the team.” They walk out of the tent and flash a torch. Relief washes over them as they see the flash returned from a little distance away. They haven’t drifted that far off. This is the first time they’ve slept in a tent by themselves instead of with the rest of the team. The ice is constantly shifting at the Poles and if they had woken up even a few hours late they would have lost the team, stranded in the middle of nowhere, at the mercy of hungry polar bears in the blistering cold of less than -40 degrees. They pack up and join the rest to continue their 111 km trip towards the North Pole.

The twins got to their destination on April 21 this year. Less than three months later, they would scale the last peak on their itinerary and become the first Indians and the youngest people ever to complete the Explorers Grand Slam within just two short years. This involves scaling the highest peaks of the seven continents and traversing both the North and South poles on skis. The 23-year-olds, originally from Haryana, spent their early years across the country, studying at more than nine different schools in Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Manipur and Uttar Pradesh owing to their father Col Virendra Singh Malik’s army background. So, from an early age, they were adept at handling unfamiliar situations.

Their tryst with the peaks began six years ago in 2009 while attending the basic mountaineering course at



HOW THEY DID IT

It took real grit, hardwork and sheer determination to scale the highest peaks. A timeline of their expeditions.

2013	(North America)
May 19 Mt Everest	December 16 Mt Vinson
August 22 Mt Elbrus	(Antarctica)
2014	December 28 South Pole
January 29 Mt Aconcagua	2015
March 19 Mt Carstensz Pyramid	April 21 North Pole
June 4 Mt McKinley	July 15 Mt Kilimanjaro

WORLD RECORDS BROKEN

- ▶ Youngest people to complete the Explorers Grand Slam
- ▶ First twins to scale Mt Everest (Guinness World Records)
- ▶ First twins to reach the North Pole and the South Pole on skis

Nehru Mountaineering Institute in Uttarakhand. Although the twins dreamt of summiting Mount Everest way back in 2010, an adamant mother stalled their ascent for almost three years. Finally in 2013, their mother Anju Thapa Malik, buried her fears and reluctantly agreed to their Everest expedition which set them on a path that would guarantee her sleepless nights for years to come. Malik’s fears were not unfounded as the twins had to brave not just sub-zero temperatures of -50 to -60 degrees but deadly snow storms and the risk of hypothermia while on this mission. “McKinley was the most notorious climb. It was ridden with snowstorms and

most climbers had descended with frostbites on their fingers and toes that would later be amputated. We were asked to give up but our fate did not necessarily have to be the same as others, we thought. We were right about continuing because we were the first people to make it to the top that season,” says Nungshi recounting their summit of Mount McKinley in Alaska.

At the ‘balcony’, which is a small platform en route the last leg of the Everest climb at 8,400 metres, Nungshi’s oxygen mask malfunctioned. The air at this point is so thin that a person can die of asphyxiation within a few hours without an oxygen

tank. “It was the scariest experience. Nungshi was feeling faint already and we were deliberating turning back when a kind sherpa on his way down lent us his oxygen mask,” says Tashi. The twins always had each others backs, motivating and pushing each other. When one was low the other lifted her spirits. “There were times where we would have given up if we were alone. Luckily, we could count on each other for nearly everything without thinking twice,” says Nungshi.

“Mountaineering is given a lot of importance by the international community who jump at the opportunity to follow and sponsor their mountaineers, especially for an achievement like the Explorers Grand Slam but the sport is neglected in India,” say the twins, who watched their parents struggle and put everything on the line for their mission. Climbing each of these summits and the Poles cost between ₹5 lakh and ₹60 lakh. Theirs was partially sponsored by a number of Indian and international organisations, as well as the government of Uttarakhand. The rest was through personal loans and savings. The girls are currently studying exercise and sport science at the Southern Institute of Technology in New Zealand. On their return, they plan to focus on the Nungshi Tashi Foundation they started in April, this year. Through this they plan to empower young girls. The twins, who graduated in journalism from Sikkim Manipal University, also have a book in the offing and an ongoing affinity for the outdoors that extends to sports like hockey, badminton and basketball.

COOKING LIKE THE KHANS

KNOWN FOR HOSTING LEGENDARY PARTIES, ZARINE KHAN REVEALS HER TREASURED RECIPES IN *FAMILY SECRETS: THE KHAN FAMILY COOKBOOK*

BY MOEENA HALIM

Walk into Zarine and Sanjay Khan's gorgeous hacienda tucked away in the bylanes of Juhu, home to much of Mumbai's film fraternity, and it isn't hard to imagine their tastefully decorated living room filled with people enjoying a party; some swaying to background music the automatic piano is playing, others taking pleasure in the host's engrossing conversation. As is the case at every party at the Khan home, however, it is the hostess' mouthwatering spread of delicacies that is the centre of attention always.

"*Khatirdari* (hospitality) has always been a huge part of our lives. It is something that has been passed on from my mother-in-law, who was extremely traditional and would never let guests leave without serving them a meal," reveals Zarine Khan. *Barkat* (blessings that bring prosperity), the family believes, comes from feeding people, and their kitchen has never been closed since

the day Sanjay and Zarine got married in 1966.

It is clear that the house proud Khan also finds gratification from the fact that they have hosted not only Bollywood's elite, but also public figures from across the globe. While Sanjay was filming *Chandi Sona* in 1977, they met the Mauritian Prime Minister and invited him home. Soon after that, other dignitaries such as the monarchs of Nepal and Morocco also visited their home. "They would all confess to having had one of the best meals at my house. In fact, the King and Queen of Nepal found themselves so comfortable in our home and enjoyed our informal hospitality so much that they didn't want to

leave. The King's retinue was waiting in the lane outside our home, urging him to leave, but he just didn't want to," laughs Khan. But it isn't just dignitaries and movie stars who have the pleasure of their hospitality. Every day, close to 40 people including the staff, the gardeners, drivers and watchmen, even her tailor, eat at the open *langar* behind their kitchen.

GOING BACK IN TIME

In her adolescence, it was Khan's grandmother who maintained this sort of open kitchen, and enjoyed feeding the families of all of her four daughters. So when she looks back at the food and flavours of her childhood, it isn't her

mother's cooking she thinks of, reminiscing instead about her grandmother and Parsi delicacies such as dhansak and brown rice or prawn patia she prepared for them everyday. As a budding athlete with a generous appetite, Khan happily obliged her grandmother, often eating a hearty breakfast followed by a double lunch.

"When I was a child, my mother and her sisters lived with their respective families in a building adjoining what is now Shah Rukh Khan's house at Bandstand," she recalls. Her grandmother's home was a few lanes away and that's where Khan and her extended family met for dinner every night. "My grandmother was a great cook. Her house had two huge balconies overlooking the sea and we'd sit there every evening to chit chat. She'd lay the dinner on a long dining table, and we'd sit together to eat," she says.

It was when her family moved to the private Jussawala Wadi compound in Juhu, and Khan met her future husband, Sanjay, and his mother, the late Bibi Fatima Begum Khan, that

HOW TO PREPARE A PARTY MENU

- Make sure all your ingredients are the freshest possible.
- While formulating the menu, remember to pair the right dishes to whet your guests' appetites.
- If you have khichdi, which is yellow in colour, pair it with a red tamatar mirchi gosht, then a green chawli ki bhaji and shami kebabs, aloo ka bharta after that.
- Place them all together on one table and half your battle is won.

Zarine Khan loves
to entertain guests
with her recipes

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ASHIMA NARAIN/ROLLI BOOKS





WHAT TO SERVE AT AN IMPROMPTU PARTY

- Biryani is your best option when you have guests turning up out of the blue. "I always serve it at important family occasions," says Khan.
- It's a common misconception that biryani is tedious and time-consuming. You'll see from my book that it isn't.
- The secret is to have nice soft meat, the potatoes nicely done and the aroma coming from saffron.

she got her first taste of homemade Nawabi cuisine. Food had always been important to her, even in her aristocratic Parsi Katrak family where the meals were carefully planned, but it is to the time when she first entered the Khan household that Zarine traces back her interest in cooking. It is not surprising then, that the story behind

her recently launched cookbook *Family Secrets: The Khan Family Cookbook* is so intrinsically linked with the story of how she met Sanjay and more crucially, her relationship with her mother-in-law, who she has dedicated the book to.

SPILLING SECRETS

She was barely 14 years old when she first met the Khan family. "Every morning, Fatima Bibi would wave to me as I walked to my school bus stop and I began to think of it as a lucky charm. Little did I know that she would one day become my mother-in-law. She loved me dearly right from the beginning. I think she hoped one of her five sons would take a shine to me," chuckles Khan.

Over the seven years she and Sanjay were 'going steady', Khan would request her mother-in-law to teach her how to make the biryanis, khichras and everyday recipes of Bangalori and Hyderabad style mutton served with various vegetables. "She loved talking about the food as much as she enjoyed cooking it. I must have been pretty clever, because I realised that the recipes would come in handy someday, and I'd note them down on little chits of paper. Later, I began collecting these slips of paper in a small file," says Khan.

It was these recipes that got Khan through her early years of marriage. "When I was pregnant with Sussanne, I remember I could hardly eat much myself, but I'd cook enough to feed the 40 people on Sanjay's film set and send them home cooked food everyday. The

food used to be so popular, I'd enjoy doing it," recalls the former model and interior designer. By the time their children had grown up and married, the food of the Khan household had become widely loved. So when daughters Farah, Simone and Sussanne got married, she handed them each a copy of the recipes. "That, I suppose, was the beginning of this cookbook," she reveals.

Apart from Bibi Fatima's classic recipes of biryani, khichra, kheema, kebabs and chops, the book also includes a few Parsi favourites such as fish in white gravy or prawn patia and some of the family's much-loved Continental dishes including lasagna, which Khan insists is best made by son Zayed. Fish fried in green masala, a great favourite of late actor Sunil Dutt's, also finds a place in the book. Ask Khan about this and she bursts into a smile. "I remember we went to visit Sunil Dutt when he was admitted to Breach Candy Hospital once and he said to me, 'Zarine please bring me your hare masale ki machli.' The hospital of course wouldn't allow it, but I managed to get it to him somehow and he was thrilled," she recalls.

The cookbook, beautifully garnished with photos of the close-knit family, is a testament to how important food is to all of them. When Khan's four children were growing up, meal times were meant to be free of gadgets and a time to bond. Though family meals are now usually limited to Sunday lunch, their meal time traditions have continued.

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POWER DRESSING

GIVE YOUR WORKWEAR WARDROBE A MAKEOVER. HERE ARE THE LOOKS YOU'LL NEED TO GET THE BOARDROOM TALKING.

PICTURE PERFECT

Column dresses have long been a workwear staple. The appeal just refuses to die. This season, add some colour and keep it simple and understated.

Kenneth Cole dress and bag
Accessorize earrings and bracelet
Christian Louboutin shoes
Omega watch

PHOTOGRAPHS **RAJWANT RAWAT**
TEXT & COORDINATION **SAURAV BHANOT**
STYLING **GUL GARG**
MAKE-UP & HAIR STYLING **SOHNI JUNEJA**
MODEL **POLINA AT KARMA MODELS**
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THE REAL SCENT OF SUCCESS





ALL THINGS CLASSIC

The classic suit look gets a makeover with a top instead of a shirt, loafers instead of heels and a comfortable silhouette instead of fitted.

**Kenneth Cole top and pants
Dior loafers, bag and earrings
Zara blazer
Omega watch**

A woman with dark hair styled in a braid stands in a rustic, industrial-style setting. She is wearing a light-colored, vertically striped long-sleeved shirt tucked into high-waisted, dark navy blue trousers. A blue and white patterned scarf is tied around her neck. She is also wearing silver high-heeled boots and a dark watch on her left wrist. The background features a white brick wall, a copper-colored pendant light, and two glass bottles on a shelf. To the left, there is a white stone pillar with orange and white mosaic bands.

GOING BACK IN TIME

High-waisted bootlegged trousers are the new workwear staple. A tucked in blouse, eye-catching boots and a scarf tied around, this is as retro as it gets.

H&M shirt and pants

Dior boots

Shingora scarf

Victorinox watch



IT'S A WRAP

A wrap dress is both form-flattering and trendy. A black one layered with a textured jacket makes it even more appealing.

Rajesh Pratap Singh dress
H&M jacket
Christian Louboutin pumps
Dior earrings
Jimmy Choo glasses
Accessorize ring



CAN DO NO WRONG

The autumn-winter season is incomplete without a great trench coat. Team it with a pencil skirt and you have a look that's the talk of the town.

Burberry shirt and trench coat
Cameron Kham skirt
Accessorize earrings and ring
Christian Louboutin shoes

“I would do anything to work with Sanjay Leela Bhansali”

By SUHANI SINGH

Daughter of actor Suniel Shetty and interior designer and social activist Mana, 22-year-old Athiya Shetty makes her Bollywood debut this month in the Salman Khan production *Hero*, a remake of the popular 1983 film. Shetty grew up in south Mumbai away from the film industry and rarely visited the sets of her father's films. But acting was always on her mind. She performed in plays at the American School of Bombay, Mumbai, and later did a filmmaking course at the New York Film Academy, US. “I am most comfortable performing in front of a camera or in front of people,” says Shetty.

FONDEST MEMORY

My first day on the set of *Hero* at Kala Ghoda in Mumbai. My family—mother, father and brother—were there to cheer for me.

WILDEST DREAM

Walking on the red carpet of the Oscars

FIRST JOB

Acting

WORST DATE

I don't think I have ever had one. I have been lucky.

DREAM ROLE

I have a dream director, Sanjay Leela Bhansali. He presents the actresses so beautifully in all his films. I would do anything to work



with him. Otherwise Anjali from *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* was my favourite character when I was growing up.

APPLE OR ANDROID?

I'm an Apple girl

QUALITIES YOU DESPISE IN A MAN

When they are boastful and preach a lot. That's a turn off.

ONE MAN YOU COULD IMPORT FROM

HOLLYWOOD AS YOUR CO-STAR?

Ryan Gosling. He is really hot and a fabulous actor too.

IF YOU COULD BE A FLY ON THE WALL OF ANY ACTOR'S HOME?

I don't care about the actors. I need to know who the directors are casting. In that case, it would be Sanjay Leela Bhansali again.

MOST UNGLAMOROUS PART

OF YOUR LIFE

In the morning and when I am returning home; you'll find me in my pyjamas or track pants.

LATEST HOBBY

TV shows. I am obsessed with *Grey's Anatomy*. I am depressed that the latest season is over now so I have been watching the reruns.

BEST WAY TO DE-STRESS

Going to the gym

A MOVIE YOU SAW JUST BECAUSE EVERYONE ELSE WAS TALKING ABOUT IT

Still Alice. I especially loved actor Julianne Moore in it but it was mighty depressing.

GUILTY PLEASURE

Desserts. I love chocolates and French fries. Basically everything that is unhealthy.

FAVOURITE HOTSPOT

London. But at home, I have this couch which is located perfectly close to the kitchen, next to the TV, the sockets are nearby and I can charge my phone and laptop simultaneously. It is comfortable enough for my dog to pile on.

ROLE MODEL

My mother inspires me every day. She is a non-judgemental person. She has no negativity towards anybody.

BIGGEST STRENGTH

Right now everyone is telling me that I am confident, which is surprising, because growing up, I wasn't.

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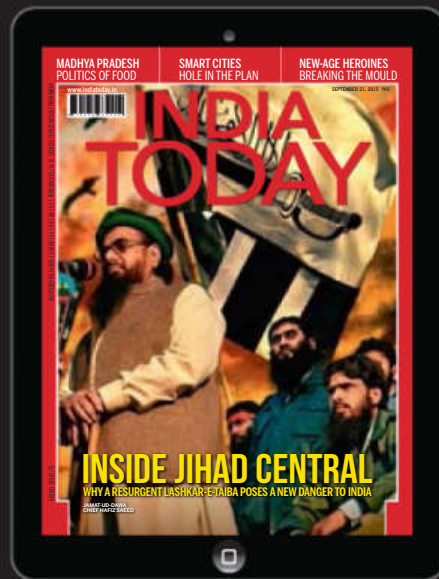


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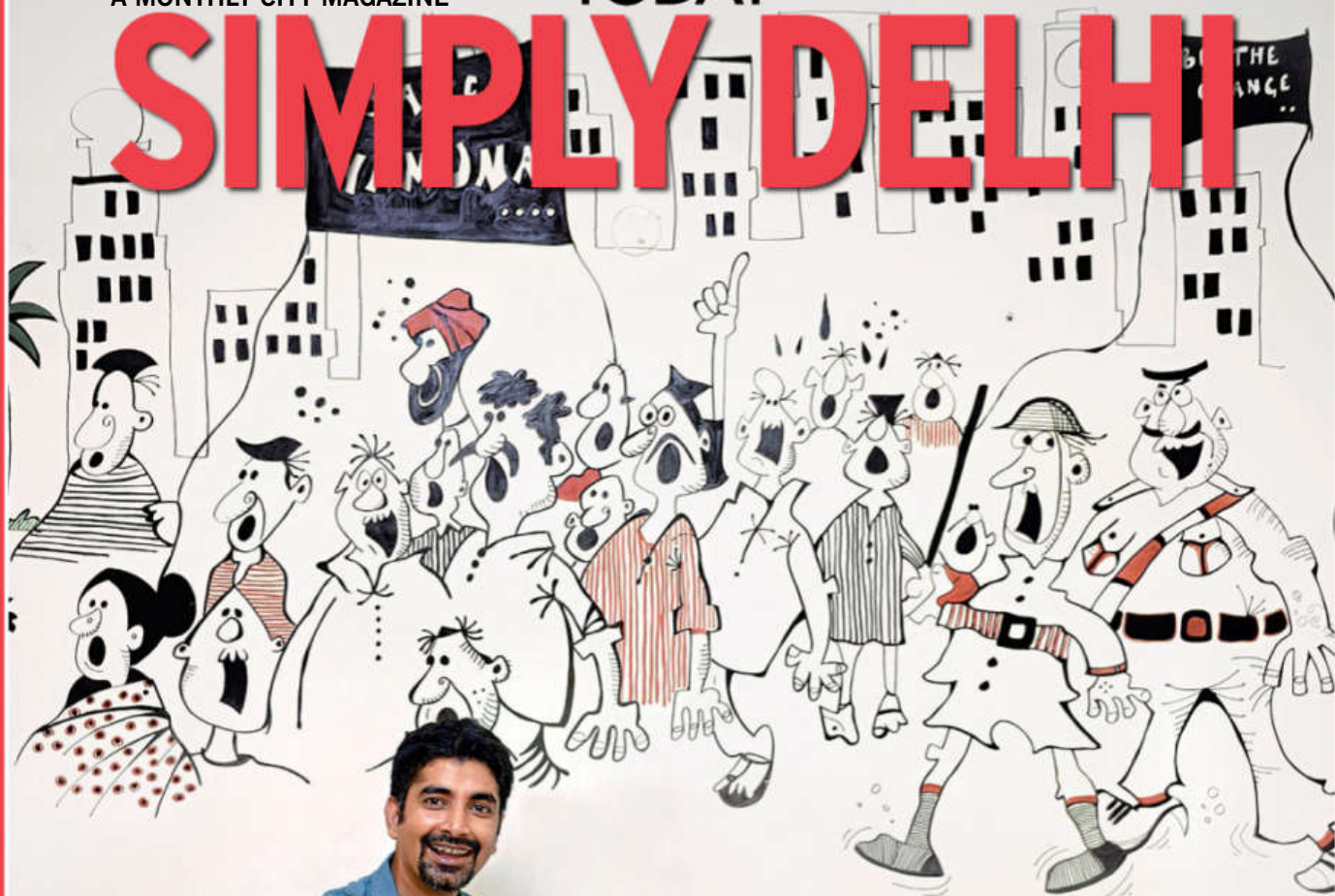
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Photograph by CHANDRADEEP KUMAR

COVER STORY**Capital Change s-4**

From cleaning the Yamuna to advocating freedom of speech, these young Delhiites are making a difference.

FEATURE**They See Delhi s-15**

These Delhiites capture, in their own mediums, the beat of the city.

Cover photo by M ZHAZO

OUR PICK of the month

Art in Motion September 25 to 27

Every year as a part of its endeavour to redefine and rejuvenate India's rich cultural heritage, Natya Tarangini and Padma Bhushans Dr. Raja Radha Reddy organise the Parampara Series—National Festival of Music and Dance. The Parampara Series, conducted after the monsoons and before the withering autumn, is synonymous with Delhi's annual cultural scene. The show will stage performances by Padma Bhushan Dr. Raja Radha Reddy,



classical music vocalist Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar, Manipuri dancer Preeti Patel and many more.

Venue Kamani Auditorium, Copernicus
Marg Timings 7 p.m. onwards

Want to tell us about an event? A new store? A restaurant? People doing interesting things?
Anything newsworthy? Please email us at: simplydelhi@intoday.com



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PEOPLE POLITICS

DEEPA KUMAR, 24, Founder, GrassRoute India

Because Kumar's GrassRoute India has managed to make a dent in the thinking and attitude of both politicians and the citizens in just two short years. After completing a Bachelors in Political Science from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, Kumar worked with Rajeev Chandrasekhar, an Independent MP in the Rajya Sabha from Bangalore, as part of the Legislative Assistants to Members of Parliament (LAMP) Fellowship. It was here that she realised the gap between MPs and citizens and decided to bridge it through GrassRoute India.

► **Because** GrassRoute India focuses on national issues—such as LGBT rights, youth participation, voting rights for armed

CAPITAL CHANGE

FROM CLEANING THE YAMUNA TO ADVOCATING FREEDOM OF SPEECH, THESE YOUNG DELHIITES ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

BY REWATI RAU, KAVYANJALI KAUSHIK AND ASMITA BAKSHI

forces, cyber crime etc. "We've ushered a lot of citizens into a space where they now believe that directly questioning an MP—to hold a constructive dialogue—is a possibility. MPs crowd-source more freely now. Citizens are increasingly becoming an active part of the policy discourse," says Kumar.

► **Because** Kumar's initiative proves the simple, but powerful impact of a democratic process. "The attitude is not yet entirely conducive to the existence of such a concept. Justifying my idea to most people has been a tough task. We enable dialogue but it needs to be more about impacting the policy directly—where a citizen goes from feeling enabled to feeling empowered," she says.

Photograph by M ZHAZO



THE CLEAN UP ACT

VIMLENDU JHA, 35, Founder, Swechha

► **Because** Jha's Swechha is not just any NGO with a cursory aim. It's a mammoth organisation with its arms spread across various issues, spreading awareness, engaging the youth and cleaning the Yamuna—its foremost priority. The movement started 15 years ago, during which Jha has been running awareness, action and advocacy campaigns for the river. Swechha engages people from all over the country through Yamuna Yatras (12-day journeys along the river) and Yamuna Walks ("tracing the river"). At the same time, large-scale events such as Shramdaan, Cyclothon and music concerts are also organised with the aim of bringing people together on a common platform.

► **Because** Instead of taking a high-flying job after

graduating from St. Stephen's College, Delhi University, this Bihar boy took on the challenge of cleaning the Yamuna and went on to pursue a Masters in Social Work from Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. "How could a city which boasts of so many powerful and pompous English-speaking citizens have a dying river no one cares about?" says Jha.

► **Because** Swechha has been one of the biggest pressure groups fighting for this cause. "We have witnessed a substantial behavioural and perspective change in the people we have worked with. My experience opened my eyes to the fact that the Yamuna doesn't just represent river pollution—it echoes a larger issue of the citizens' irresponsible interaction with their natural resources," he says.



Photograph by RAJWANT RAWAT

THE AGE OF CHANGE

KABIR CHADHA, 29, Founder, Epoch Eldercare, **NEHA SINHA**, 28, CEO, Epoch Eldercare

► **Because** It was their own grandparents who inspired these young entrepreneurs to do something for the elderly. While Chadha, a Stanford University graduate, moved in with his 83-year-old grandmother after returning to India in 2011, Sinha was brought up by her grandparents as her own parents travelled for work. Armed with practical knowledge of the "lives and loneliness of the elderly", Chadha set up Epoch Eldercare in January 2012 with Sinha as his first employee.

► **Because** Epoch started as a consulting service with elder care experts visiting people's homes and providing the required services. In June last year, Chadha and Sinha went on to set up their own facility in Gurgaon that currently houses 14 senior citizens between the ages 65 and 93. Each elderly person is given a space with all necessary amenities, including televisions, air conditioning, heaters, a laundry service etc. There's a caregiver assigned to each resident who takes care of their daily needs including nursing, daily walks, grooming, social activities, food and more.

► **Because** Epoch has a separate arm of dementia care, which is run by Sinha. "Our dementia care programme runs in collaboration with specialists (doctors, physiotherapists and speech therapists)," she says.



**LABOUR
OF LAW****SHREYA SINGHAL,**
24, Law student

► **Because** The last time the Supreme Court struck down a statutory provision because it was an infringement on the fundamental right to free speech, was 55 years ago. In April, in a landmark decision on a petition filed by law student Shreya Singhal, the apex court declared Section 66A of the IT Act to be unconstitutional. "The trigger was the arrest of two girls, no older than me, in Maharashtra after Bal Thackeray's death," says Singhal. "One of them posted on Facebook, 'why was Bombay shut down, out of fear or respect', the other one simply liked it," she adds. The section was problematic in

its vague wording and resulting sentence, criminalising content on the Internet. "The language of the Section is shocking—'annoying', 'grossly offensive', 'dangerous', 'inconvenience' are used to describe a criminal act, that carries a sentence of up to three years," she says.

► **Because** Singhal describes the victory as "surreal". Her foray into law was a result of dinner table conversation. "I was indecisive about what I wanted to do after getting a Bachelors in Astrophysics," says Singhal. But working with a legal NGO, Lawyers Collective, A Women's Rights Initiative under Indira Jaising, piqued her interest in law.



NET WORTH

**VISHWAJOY
MUKHERJEE, 26,**
Co-founder,
Pechkas Pictures

► **Because** Mukherjee, an Asian College of Journalism grad, used to think up original stories to tell—and break out of the medium of writing to do it—during his time at *Tehelka*. "I don't have the stereotypical this-is-what-I've-wanted-to-do-as-a-child story, where I walked about with a camera around my neck from when I was young," he says. "I quit and made corporate films with a production company in Gurgaon, which was terribly boring," he says.

► **Because** All this indecisiveness and constant scuttling culminated in Pechkas Pictures and its debut production, *Baked*, a seven-episode web series that breaks the Indian televisual depiction of the Indian youth (which essentially entails using that word "dude" four times in one sentence while having dance-offs in college). The show is about

three friends from Delhi University (reminiscent of his own days as a student of Literature at Ramjas College) who set up a midnight delivery service.

► **Because** A few weeks into its release, *Baked* got a whopping 2.5 lakh hits. "Our budget was humble and the entire series cost less than half the budget of one episode of *TVF Pitchers*," says Mukherjee, who realised the immense potential of the online space after having watched successful Indian sketch comedy videos on YouTube. This was a shocking revelation, considering the production quality was spectacular and so were the performances and writing. "We could shoot on the streets of Delhi in the middle of the night with impunity," he says. "We didn't need to bother with permits and whatnot, like one does in Mumbai."

Photograph by VIKRAM SHARMA



An untitled lithograph
by Akbar Padamsee

1#

A SKETCH IN TIME

An exhibition of lithographs by iconic artist Akbar Padamsee will open in the city in October



Akbar Padamsee
Artist

"It seems to me that it is not possible to ever exhaust all possibilities of imaging the human head, each similar and yet so dissimilar to the other. My ardent search is for a look, a gaze, an expression, a stance, a placement," says 87-year-old artist Akbar Padamsee. It is this search that will be shown to Delhiites next month in an exhibition titled, *A Life Less Ordinary*. Presented by Priyank Jain of Dhoomimal.com gallery, the 20 lithographs have been created between the years 2008 to 2010. A fall in 2014 might have restricted his movements to the wheelchair, but the frailty in his voice does not diminish the childlike excitement about what

he's spent his life doing—imagining, creating and painting. "I can't sit and paint, so I stand and paint a little every day," says Padamsee, one of the country's most iconic artists. The trysts with art still continue with utmost passion. He says, "Chinese ink has been my favourite for a long time. But it takes a lot of control to work in ink, and after my fall, I'm trying to get back that control. I also love working with oils. Once the Mumbai weather improves after the monsoon, I will start working in oils again."

At Triveni Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, Copernicus Marg
When October 26 to November 11 ■ **By** Rewati Rau

5
EVENTS TO LOOK
FORWARD TO

2# REVIVAL INSTINCTS

Move over abstract and contemporary art, here's something to take you back to the roots. Artist Pooja Singhal will showcase her collection of Pichwai art work depicting the five years of work she's put into engaging with this traditional art form. Done on a cloth or a paper, Pichwais are intricate works of art which illustrate stories from the life of Lord Krishna. The exhibition will be accompanied by collateral events, including talks by well known historians and guided-curated walks. All this in a beautiful venue—a 1950s bungalow in the heart of central Delhi.

AT 24, Jor Bagh

WHEN September 22 to October 6

TIMINGS 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.



3# NEIGHBOUR'S PRIDE

How about a dose of Pakistani theatre this September? NGO Routes2Routes brings to the city a Pakistani Theatre Festival. Touted as the first festival of its kind from across the border, the four-day event will enact renowned plays from across the border. Written by Shahid Nadeem, the plays will bring the essence of Mughal Era to the stage. From stories of Darak Shikoh, the eldest son of emperor Shahjahan, to Bulleh Shah, the beacon of hope and humanism, the plays have a wealth of stories to share.

AT Kamani Auditorium, Copernicus Marg

WHEN September 14 to September 17

TEL 7 p.m. onwards

TICKETS Entry by passes

DETAILS 4164383, routes2routes.com

4# CULTURAL SOIRÉE >>

An eclectic mix of theatrical performances, forays into the literary world, and dance and musical programmes, The Park Hotels' annual The Park's New Festival Edition IX will kick start in Chennai and will travel to six cities including Hyderabad, Bangalore, Kolkata, Mumbai before concluding in Delhi. Spend your weekend enthralled in the throes of a physical comedy, *EnFlightenment*, depicting the story of a globalised world and the flight journeys that keep it connected. Established dancers and performers, Akram Khan and Israel Galván will bring together the distinct dance forms of Kathak and Flamenco to create a dynamic performance. Perfect for all lovers of music, The Colliding Worlds Project is a 90-minute musical programme combining Indian classical, folk, jazz and hip-hop music. Wrapping up the festival will be the book launch of *Until the Lions* by Karthika Nair, who successfully narrates the beloved epic of the Mahabharata through the eyes of the unnamed spouses of soldiers, handmaidens, abducted princesses, outcast warriors and tribal queens.

WHEN October 10 to 14 **AT** Various venues across the city **FOR DETAILS** 8754415362

■ **By Saniya Anand**

Deepti Naval and Shekhar Suman in *Ek Mulaqat*



Aditya Prakash of The Colliding Worlds Project

5# THE STAGE IS SET <<

There's a lot to keep Delhi's theatre aficionados busy this month with the city playing host to prominent playwright Saif Hyder Hasan's productions, *Gardish Mein Taare* and *Ek Mulaqat*.

Part of a trilogy, the two period dramas celebrate the 1950s and the saga of the lives of legendary artistes. *Gardish Mein Taare* is inspired by the life of filmmaker Guru Dutt and his singer-wife Geeta Dutt. Through its fictional characters Devdutt Bose (Arif Zakaria) and Bhavana (Sonali Kulkarni), it gives the audience a peek into their tumultuous marriage and depicts the magic and suffering in their life. *Ek Mulaqat* is a depiction of the life of the celebrated Urdu poet Sahil Ludhianvi and his wife, the legendary poet Amrita Pritam. Shekhar Suman and Deepti Naval portray two hours in the lives of these two great litterateurs in this play.

AT At FICCI Auditorium, Mandi House Chowk

WHEN September 19 to 20

TIMINGS 5.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

FOR DETAILS 23738760

*PREVIEW / SANGAM COURTYARD*

Out with the old, in with the new

The forgotten South Delhi address, RK Puram Sector 12, has got a makeover with the Sangam Courtyard and is all set to see a deluge of Delhiites descending soon. With a swanky two-screen PVR Sangam and a host of food restaurants, the Courtyard seem set to be the city's latest entertainment destination of the city.

► **FATTY BAO** One of the first restaurants to open its doors here, the Asian gastrobar is the brainchild of chef Manu Chandra of Monkey Bar fame. Apart from the signature open baos, don't miss Chasu Ramen, Spicy Scallop Nigri and Fatty Oysters.

► **DELHI CLUB HOUSE** Restaurateur Marut Sikka's latest venture is the Gymkhana-club styled, membership-only Delhi Club House, which will open its doors on September 16. The menu reinvents good old comfort food and features old favourites like masala cheese toast, chilli chicken and crispy spinach chaat.

► **CAFE DELHI HEIGHTS** Known for its juicy burgers, Cafe Delhi Heights has opened its biggest restaurants ever in the city at the Courtyard. It is serving its traditional menu, but in a new avatar. There's



(Clockwise from top) The quirky, cheerful interiors of Fatty Bao; PVR Sangam

much more quirk in terms of the ambience now with games on every table and a hopscotch design on the floor.

► **CAFE DIVA** On the first floor of the complex is chef Ritu Dalmia's popular eatery. On the menu are the classic Italian salads, soups, pizzas and pastas.

► **STARBUCKS** Get a fix of your favourite cuppa at this cafe giant's sprawling new outlet at Sangam.



(Left) Wild Mushroom Cappuccino;
(right) Chipotle Chicken Slider

RESTAURANT REVIEW / GASTRONOMICA

GLOBAL PLATTERS

Gastronomica is home to everything good that its owner, Sumit Goyal, has tasted during his travels across the world. That might question the novelty of the dishes, but it certainly doesn't put any dent on their taste. The menu spans European, Pan-Asian and Indian cuisines, with many delicious platters and a few forgetful ones. Gastronomica's interiors are flawless with a wood-fired oven, a live pasta counter, the interesting flooring, which has been created out of wine box crate stampings, and an installation on the wall that

reads *In Vino Veritas* (in wine there is truth), made using over 800 wine bottles. In starters, we adored the Quinoa Bhel, a super healthy mix of quinoa, tamarind chutney, puffed rice and vegetables. For mains, we suggest you go with Roasted Lamb Chops and Kadak Papad Kebab. The kebab, made with spinach and broccoli (no, don't make a face) was just the right amount of tender and light, and served with a tangy chutney. **Our Pick** Roasted Lamb Chops At Second floor, M-55, M-Block Market, Greater Kailash-I Tel 9971172933 ■ **By Kavyanjali Kaushik**

NEWMENUREVIEW / MONKEY BAR

Fresh Flavours

Three years, three cities and five outlets across Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore later, Monkey Bar has revamped its menu, inspired by pubs all over the world, yet unabashedly Indian. On the menu are dishes like Baingan Pakoda Phulka Tacos, a tribute to the humble eggplant; Mochar Chop (mochar chop, served with sour cream and chutney) and cocktails like the Don Draper (Ballantine's, sugarcane, clove and bitters). For vegetarians, the Rajinikanth Rice is sheer perfection. In desserts, we recommend Gud Bud Falooda, their take on the sundae.

OUR PICK Chicken Chimichuri **MEAL FOR TWO** Rs 2,500
AT P-3/90, Connaught Circus and Plot No 11, Pocket C 6-7, Commercial Complex, Vasant Kunj **TEL** 41095155



DELHI'S NEW STORYTELLERS

Welcome to Delhi. From the Metro lines forming its arteries and tearing through the maze of its urban jungle, to the historic monuments pulsating with its history spanning millennia, from the corridors of power buzzing with intrigue to

the sprawling homes packed with wealth and privilege, Delhi has always defined paradoxes. These Delhiites capture, in their own mediums, the city's unique beat and show just how magical Delhi really is.

By KAVYANJALI KAUSHIK

ARJUN PANDEY, 36 Founder, Delhipedia



Delhipedia's map of Old Delhi

Multiple award-winning filmmaker Arjun Pandey's Delhipedia takes you on a visual and experiential journey of Delhi—from its fabled street foods and posh cocktail bars to places of worship, spirituality, museums and art galleries, it is a location-based video guide with the largest online community in India for a city on Facebook (facebook.com/delhipedia). It has 1,76,000 plus users, an Android app and a YouTube channel with over 123 videos (with another 100 ready to be uploaded and more being

shot every week). Launched in 2014, Delhipedia helps you explore places of interest nearest to you sans the long text descriptions. The free app has a library of videos of the places you want to visit and provides information on events currently happening, monuments and restaurants. Pandey's filmmaking skills are clearly visible in the videos, which are short and to the point.

See more at youtube.com/user/delhipedia

Download the app from goo.gl/ofeqEd





A walk conducted by Rooprai with students of Mata Sundri College for Women

VIKRAMJIT S ROOPRAI, 31

Founder, Youth for Heritage Foundation

Vikramjit Rooprai, a digital marketing consultant, realised the power of involving youth in any cause when he started organising photography and heritage tours of Delhi's monuments in 2009. He saw how curious people were of whatever little they saw, and how this wired generation, by interacting via the social media, can bring the focus back on our often neglected heritage. He decided to start *monumentsofdelhi.com*, an online repository of information, and Delhi Heritage Photography Club. In

2014, his clubs got registered under the umbrella organisation of Youth for Heritage Foundation. The Foundation conducts heritage walks, *durbars* (talks), trips outside Delhi and sessions with schools, colleges and corporates. Rooprai also holds a monthly session at India Habitat Centre, where he invites a heritage expert to speak on a topic. He also runs a digital magazine called Heritage Archives. **See more at** youthforheritage.org



FREDDIE STORM, SAUMYA CHOUDHURY

Founders, Delhi Poetry Slam



Organising one of the most groundbreaking slam poetry events in the city, Delhi Poetry Slam, founded in 2013, is a spoken word organisation building confidence and creating community consciousness among youngsters. The performances take place at venues across the city, including colleges and pubs, and witness the participation of several international and local slam

poets, dwelling on a range of perspectives on feminism and gay rights as well as personal anecdotes.

See more at delhipoetryslam.com



Poet Divya Dureja during a performance

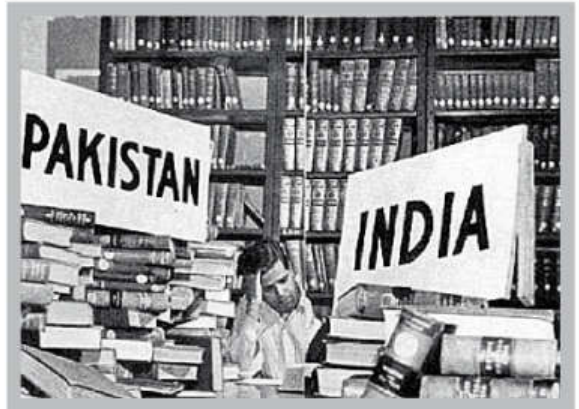
KISHWAR DESAI, 58

Author



Kishwar Desai, author and head of the Arts and Cultural Heritage Trust, is on a mission to preserve memories associated with Partition of India. Desai plans to set up the Partition Museum to display books, photographs, journals, art works, films, textiles

and other mementos from that period. While the location has not been finalised yet, Desai, along with her team, is visiting probable sites in Delhi and Amritsar. "Apart from the Museum, we want to launch a series of exhibitions, talks and much more when we inaugurate the project. I want to see it set up by late 2016 or 2017," says Desai, who was touring Punjab recently to collect stories from families who experienced Partition first hand.



"It was so emotional. But apart from the tragedy, we also want to focus on an optimistic future. We want to tell stories of survival of people who came with nothing but are now leading successful lives," says Desai.

Read more at goo.gl/GRWZ9b



RAJAT MAHANTI, 19

Illustrator

Rajat Mahanti catches the exact, everyday mood of the Delhi Metro and its 2.4 million commuters in his hilarious illustrations. The young graphic designer's painfully honest observations in a series of eight illustrations show the struggle of commuting during peak hours, the light moments shared between passengers and the downright ugly side of rowdy seat-grabbers. From describing the battle every passenger has to prepare for at Rajiv Chowk Metro Station to get in as "This is Spartaa!", to accurately declaring the Metro as the new hotspot for lovers in the "Love is in the Metro" poster, Mahanti captures the culture of the Metro.

Mahanti plans to take his designing skills forward by becoming an entrepreneur, launching his own graphic designing company in the future.

See more at facebook.com/absolutedesi.in



Rajat Mahanti's quirky, minimalist posters of the Delhi Metro



A still from Ayush Dinker's hyperlapse video

AYUSH DINKER, 26

Filmmaker

When Ayush Dinker moved to Delhi from Kanpur last year, he decided to spend one month exploring and filming the city. His video, which is titled *Go Delhi Go* and has received 60,000 hits so far, traverses the chaotic Janpath street market and the manicured gardens of Lutyens' Delhi.

"My next focus is on creating documentary-style videos of Meghalaya and Kolkata," says Dinker, who runs *Ethereal*, a company documenting indigenous cultures from different parts of the country using photographs, films and photo essays. **See the video at** goo.gl/OKvJnc



Humanyun's Tomb, as seen through Rabindra Verma's lens



Where Stones Speak: Historical Trails In Mehrauli, The First City Of Delhi

RANA SAFVI, 58

Author



Rana Safvi describes her book, *Where Stones Speak: Historical Trails In Mehrauli, The First City Of Delhi*, as a labour of love.

"I've been fascinated by the stories hidden in stones from childhood. This book is my tribute to those stories," she says.

Safvi's book is an extensive research and a storehouse of stories on Mehrauli, the first city of Delhi. Safvi has done a Masters in History from Aligarh Muslim University. She is also a passionate promoter of Ganga-Jamuni *tehzeeb*—a cultural fusion of Hindu and Muslim elements. She runs a blog, hazrat-e-dilli.com, which is a treasure trove of "Delhi's stories, food, customs, traditions, *tehzeeb* and monuments".

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RABINDRA VERMA, 27

Photographer and banker

Rabindra Verma's photographs have no added element of surprise. There's no pretentious post processing, no unnecessary photographic or technologic show off. Instead, he engages the viewers



by the stark simplicity of his frames. The drama of Delhi is captured by skewed angles, breathtaking, candid street shots that one might otherwise miss, and colours, lots and lots of colours. He uses his relationship with his city of birth to click intimate, intense and gritty photographs, whose subjects range from architecture and people to animals and nature. Verma, who works in the risk management arm of Yes Bank, says, "I think following just one passion blindly for years disintegrates the interest in it after a while. I love my job and I love photography, and I feel I follow them both better if they run parallel to each other."

Instagram handle @robman13

INDIA
TODAY

SIMPLY CHENNAI

A MONTHLY CITY MAGAZINE

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THE OLD
CURIOSITY
SHOP

ROOM FOR CHANGE

INNOVATIVE IDEAS TO TRANSFORM YOUR HOME

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Photograph by JAISON G

COVER STORY

House of Ideas s-4
Spruce up your living spaces with these simple and refreshing tips that are budget-friendly and innovative.

BUZZ

Into the city s-8
Find out what to do, what to shop for and where to eat.

Cover photo by JAISON G

OUR PICK of the month

Spring Food September 18 to 27

Enjoy recipes that are created with the goodness of nature and fresh produce as the Wild Garden Cafe at Amethyst presents a delicious array of garden fresh salad crisps. The exclusive menu features spinach and goat cheese crepes, mixed peppers galette, oven baked penne with mushroom and cheddar, Salad Nicoise and Caesar chicken salad with anchovy dressing.



At Amethyst, next to Corporation Bank,
Whites Road, Royapettah
Tel 45991630

Want to tell us about an event? A new store? A restaurant? People doing interesting things?
Anything newsworthy? Please email us at: simplychennai@intoday.com



Photographs by JAISON G

Kashmira Daruwalla,
owner, Hide Out

HOUSE OF IDEAS

SPRUCE UP YOUR LIVING SPACES WITH THESE SIMPLE AND REFRESHING TIPS THAT ARE INNOVATIVE AND BUDGET-FRIENDLY

By SARANYA CHAKRAPANI

❀ Yin Yang And Beyond ➤ Hide Out Feng Shui boutique

One of the city's foremost Feng Shui experts, 41-year-old Kashmirira Daruwalla's shop Hide Out is a quiet and comforting space, with warm natural light flooding in through glass windows and the aura of incense in the air. The wind chimes jingle away softly and potted bamboos of various sizes form lovely patterns on the walls. Talking about the science behind it, Daruwalla says, "Feng Shui basically works as an energy shifter. We most commonly apply what is known as the Flying Star Feng Shui, which is like drawing the horoscope of the house. Dancing bamboos make for a good

addition to the house. Placing six balls of natural crystals such as rose quartz and amethyst in the living room is a great Feng Shui practice too. But in my experience, what works universally is the phoenix. It brings about positivity." Daruwalla recommends the Mandarin ducks to people who want to improve their relationships and the three-legged frog for those who wish to increase their wealth.

► **PRICE** Rs 270 to Rs 30,000

► **AT** Prince Plaza, Pantheon Road, Egmore

► **TEL** 28552656



✿ Get Seasoned

➤ The Old Curiosity Shop

Shopping at The Old Curiosity Shop cannot be done in haste. Even if you were to spend a fortune here, it isn't as good as having a leisurely conversation with the owner Mohamad Lateef. This shop in Anna Salai attracts true aficionados of antiques and collectibles, and if you aren't one already, 59-year-old Lateef is sure to convert you. "In a modern house, an antique piece really stands out and makes you wonder about its heritage and history," says Lateef, who inherited this treasure trove of curios from his father in 1978 and has, been adding to the bounty ever since. With a soft speech and a smile that's always waiting to break, Lateef tells us he was once a rugged racer taking off to the tracks on weekends with his young adrenaline-hungry friends. One look around his shop that houses incredible antiques and you wonder if they may have made him the astute, mellow man he is today. And as if reading your mind, he goes on to narrate you a Mulla Nasruddin story, chuckling at the Sufi's wit as he finishes. "Antiques, like books, expand your horizons. Imagine an old underwood typewriter taking up a corner of your modern, white-tiled living room—It would make me respect the owner of the house," he says. Breaking the pattern of gold, metal, glass and ceramic on the walls at The Old Curiosity Shop are little pieces of paper with handwritten quotes on life and evolution. Juxtaposed with these are vintage dry and wet plate cameras, an archaic chandelier, an Elvis Presley clock that plays out a verse from his hits at the strike of every hour.

➤ **PRICE** Rs 90 to Rs 9 lakh

➤ **AT** 209, Mount Road, Anna Salai

➤ **TEL** 28460298

Mohamad Lateef, owner, The Old Curiosity Shop

❖ Fish Tales ➤ Aquascapers

Can you imagine what it would be like to have a little chunk of the Great Barrier Reef replicated on your bedroom wall? Balaji Narayanan, 30, pulls this and many such feats off with class. He is one of the city's foremost aquascapers, a niche art that involves creating a nature scape inside an aquarium, complete with aquatic plants, wood and rocks. Here, it's not just the physical habitat, but also subtler parameters such as the quality and temperature of the water that are regulated as per the breed of the fish. "It's environment is exactly like their natural habitat," says Narayanan. The primary aim of aquascaping is to create an artful underwater landscape, one that will add an aesthetic touch to your home and is also best for your fish's lifespan. A Feng Shui fish tank has the potential to alter the energy flow in the house too. "With the correct placement, set-up and care, the aquarium is a perfect combination of harmony and balance. The water symbolises the flow of life and growth. The motion

of the water as it circulates through the fish tank and the sounds created by its bubbling can be very relaxing," says Narayanan. Aquascaping has three primary styles—Dutch style that employs a lush arrangement with multiple plants, diverse leaf colours, sizes, and textures; Japanese Style introduced in the 1990s by Takashi Amano, which mimics natural landscapes with asymmetrical arrangement of masses of relatively few species of plants and the The Iwagumi style, where rocks provide the bony structure of the aquascape and the typical geometry employs a design with three main stones. In Chennai, the Dutch and the Iwagumi style have most takers, says Narayanan. His nano aquariums ranging from a length of one foot to 13 feet are the easiest to manage and maintain.

► **PRICE** Rs 5,000 onwards

► **AT** No 67, Brindavan Street Extension, West Mambalam

► **TEL** 9444260414



Balaji Narayanan, aquascaper

❖ Reap As You Sow

➤ Harith Tharang

When we've been taught to associate all things outdoors—from sunshine to meadows—with wellness, just how much does it take to bring some of it into our homes? An elementary understanding that plants are happy reminders of nature became impetus for Rashmi Sunil, 37, to start Harith Tharang in 2010. Her own appreciation for gardening beyond stipulated open spaces found meaning at a Dubai supermarket. "They had a section that read 'Gift a Plant', which sold beautifully wrapped pots with plants of different sizes and shapes," says Sunil. Adding fuel to her initial fire was her exposure to the eclectic portfolio of landscaping services that her in-laws offered, running the MT Rajen's Pooncholai in the city. "We started small with a 'Gift a Plant' service under Pooncholai itself. However, people welcomed this initiative with so much ardour that very soon, we opened a plant boutique," says Sunil, who insists it's not a nursery but a new concept she wanted to pioneer. "It's a conditioned space where you can pick and choose your plants and decide the arrangements. We also took liberties with the planters and have bamboo, coconut shell and ceramic pots for those who want to add an earthy touch to their décor and living spaces," says Sunil. One of her visions is to quash the mental block that indoor plants are high-maintenance. "They require the most basic care, which is regular watering," she says.

► **PRICE** Rs 40 to Rs 15,000

► **AT** 42, Rajen Street, Bazullah Road, T Nagar

► **TEL** 65275990

Rashmi Sunil, owner, Harith Tharang





Rita Vincent, senior customer in-charge, Naturally Auroville

❖ Scent-percent Organic ➤ The Naturally Auroville Store

Home perfume brands are redefining aromatherapy as a science by offering highly customised, mood-specific and exotic fragrances. Take the Bel Air room freshener for instance, which promises to transport you to “a sunny meadow filled with blooming wild flowers” or Pure Air that recreates the smell of “forest covered mountains”. These are some of the several environments that the perfumery at Naturally Auroville boutique custom-creates for you. But are people keen to spend a relatively high price for quality fragrances? Rita Vincent, 35, Naturally Auroville’s senior customer in-charge, says, “Our incenses, oils, room fresheners, soaps and candles are made from 100 percent natural plant and flower extracts and it just takes one experience to know what you’ve been missing,” she says. Naturally Auroville is a commercial unit of the Auroville Township in Pondicherry. Its first store opened in Nungambakkam’s plush Khader Nawaz Khan

Road about 14 years ago, following which, a second one was launched at Besant Nagar’s quaint and shaded Kalakshetra Colony. The store itself is an experience. Wafting across the street are lovely scents of lavender, rose, sandalwood and patchouli. It stays rooted to Auroville’s founding philosophy of sustainable communities selling products that are not just ecologically ethical but produced by craftsmen in a well-knit, healthy system. Under their home brand Maroma, they sell hand-rolled incense sticks, candles for all occasions, pillow mists and gorgeous ceramic reed diffusers with soya flowers that change colour when lit. Mix-and-match your favourite fragrances to create a relaxing environment—a haven to melt into after a long day.

► **PRICE** Rs 175 onwards
 ► **AT** Khader Nawaz Khan Road, Thousand Lights West
 ► **TEL** 28330517



EVENT PREVIEW

A CULTURAL SOIREE

In the last eight years, The Park's New Festival has grown into a celebrated platform for multidisciplinary performing arts. The New Festival, curated by Ranvir Shah, who is also the founder of Prakriti Foundation, and presented by The Park Hotels, it brings together some of the finest names in dance, music and theatre from India and the world. "We will continue to showcase exciting new work in the field of art, promote and encourage the development of cultural skills across the country and convene valuable forums for artistes in mutually beneficial projects," says Shah. In its previous years, the festival has brought together artistes

such as Shankar Tucker & troupe, Amit Chaudhuri, Azeem Banatwalla and Jyoti Dogra. Akram Khan, who was a part of the festival in 2012 will be back this year in association with Israel Galván to showcase his popular production, *Torobaka*. Other shows include The Colliding Worlds Project, a music event by Aditya Prakash, *Enlightenment*, a play by Rupesh Tillu and the book launch of *Until the Lions* by Karthika Nair. The festival will kick-start on September 20 in Chennai and continue till September 23. It will then travel to six cities including Hyderabad, Bangalore, Kolkata and Mumbai. For Details theparkhotels.com ■ By Saranya Chakrapani



The Silk Route

Nalli, known for its beautiful silk sarees, has launched its latest line with the Sivaranjani Collection 2015. The sarees, woven in pure, luxurious silk, are available in a rich colour palette, with striking borders and ornate designs.

PRICE Rs 18,000 onwards
AT 9 Nageswaran Road,
 Opp. Panagal Park, T Nagar
TEL 24344115

FOOD FESTIVAL

DINE IN STYLE

Citibank's Restaurant Week, a pan-Indian culinary event that has expanded significantly by tying up with 100 plus restaurants throughout India is back in Chennai. The basic drive behind the initiative is to encourage those who love dining out to do so more often, in style. They can unrestrainedly enjoy wonderful eats from some of the city's finest restaurants at a fraction of the a-la-carte rates. Diners will be offered a three-course prix fixe menu for Rs 750, for lunch and dinner at these restaurants.

WHEN September 11 to 20

FOR DETAILS restaurantweekindia.com